

'WHERE THERE IS NO VISION THE PEOPLE PERISH'

The Poetry Review

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*

33 PORTMAN SQUARE

LONDON W 1

Telephone: Welbeck 9393

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TRADE AGENTS

The Rolls House Publishing Co

3 Breems Buildings

London EC 4

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ADVERTISING AGENTS

Aldridge Press Ltd

27 Chancery Lane

London WC 2

VOLUME XLVIII · NUMBER II

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Next Issue:

HERBERT PALMER
on the Sonnet

STANTON COBLENTZ
'The Case for the Older Poets'

Many Poems of Distinction
Our Treasure Hunt Again

TO MEMBERS AND FRIENDS: IF YOU CAN
BUY THE BOOKS THAT ARE PUBLISHED
BY OUR ADVERTISERS YOU WILL BE GIVING
HELP ALL ROUND

TO OUR WOULD-BE CONTRIBUTORS

*

IN YOUR OWN INTEREST READ CAREFULLY -

1. **No manuscripts can be considered** which have not the name and address of the author stated in the top left-hand corner of the first page. If he is a member of the Society a bracketed M should be added.
2. **A self-addressed stamped envelope** must always be enclosed or, if an overseas contributor, the Coupon-Response International. Otherwise, no MSS will be considered. Loose stamps cannot be regarded as a substitute. Except in rare instances an introductory letter is not necessary.
3. One side only of the paper must be used; typescript is preferred.
4. Reasonable margins and top space should be left.
5. Not more than four poems should be submitted at one time. Two is an ideal number.
6. Poems over thirty lines in length have a doubtful chance of acceptance.
7. If helpful editorial suggestions are made with a returned MS, please do not reply challenging the advice. Requests for criticism, moreover, are not invited. It should be remembered that The Poetry Society already has a well-organized service for expert advice, as announced in each issue.
8. The Editorial Board does not accept responsibility for the safe custody and return of any unsolicited MSS. Authors are requested not to write expressing anxiety lest their MS is lost in the post. MSS are seldom or never lost in the post.
9. Acceptance or rejection of a MS cannot reasonably be expected until at least three months have elapsed. Inquiries by telephone cannot be dealt with.
10. The receipt of a proof does not necessarily imply immediate publication.

THESE PAGES—AN OFFERING TO

Wilfrid Gibson

The morning-spring of life, the youth of the world . . .
Ay, the Greeks knew: but men have forgotten now.
Not easily do we meet beauty walking —

Prelude: THE APRIL-TREE

Away in the Scottish Highlands they used to think of the April-Tree, otherwise the laburnum, as their first expectation when by all the signs the worst of Winter was over. 'The April-Tree: it has the yellow and white magic of spring in it.' Those are Fiona Macleod's words, written towards the close of last century — no need to say who Fiona Macleod was — but he is only one among the many of yesterday and the day before whose thoughts about the change from winter to spring have been the stuff of poetry if not poems. Another of them has written: 'The primroses stand on this table in happy little bowls, smiling at me every time I look up. The courage of flowers in these days to go on just as usual!'

Once upon a time, more than a hundred-and-twenty years ago, there dwelt in an ancient chateau in provincial France a woman belonging to a noble though humble family — Eugénie de Guérin, who relieved her lonely young life after the death of her mother and brother by keeping a secret diary. Discovered after many years, *The Journal of Eugénie de Guérin*, crowned by the Académie Française, is now a French classic, 'perhaps the most delicately spiritual work the world has ever known.' Near the close of March, 1835, the entry begins: 'This morning a shepherd told me that the wagtails had arrived. One followed the sheep all day; that is a good omen, we shall soon have flowers.'

*

'We shall soon have flowers.' Now that April's here, and the foreseen is happening for the many thousandth time, we can turn to the daffodils and tulips, and before long to the lilac and the first roses, for our life's sake, for the health of mind and spirit, depending no longer on the wintry hearthside for laughter and the love of friends — and poetry.

Laughter has been quietened and friendship more poignant for some of us just lately, because another of our own poets has died — Alfred Edgar Coppard. An obituary of over half a column about A. E. Coppard as poet and novelist, seventy-nine years young, was published in *The Times*, which declared that he had held 'almost as high a place as any among the English short-story writers of the past quarter of a century . . . a poet as well, and here, too, the quality was undoubted' — but we quote at length a more personal tribute that appeared in a local paper in North Essex where he lived:

'Four years ago a distinguished resident in the neighbourhood of Dunmow received an invitation to attend a "very special and very private" function at Oxford University. He was not told the nature of what was intended to be a surprise. It proved to be a celebration of his seventy-fifth birthday, organized by the young men and women of the University.

'This admiring tribute, supported by the Vice-Chancellor, was paid to "A. E. Coppard, the greatest short-story writer of his generation." C. Day Lewis, Richard Hughes, Rex Warner, Louis Golding and Thomas Moulton, his old friends and contemporaries, were invited to share in the tribute, and Mr. Coppard, accompanied by his wife, who as Dr. Winifred de Kok is a B.B.C. personality, spent part of his visit in renewing old associations at the local factory, where he had been employed in his youth . . . He was a lovable man, well known not only in East Anglia where he did much public work, especially as parish councillor in Norfolk and more recently in Essex, but his literary fame spread all over the world, including America and Russia. A genius in our midst, indeed! *The Literary Gazette* in Moscow has just published a tribute signed by many leading Russian authors in which it is written that "he did much to strengthen friendly ties between British and Soviet writers".'

We of The Poetry Society shall miss his frequent appearances in his own programme at a Friday Reading, his happy choice of poem and story, superbly-written manifestations of his sparkling love of life.

*

Pearl Adam, friend of Kipling and a gifted journalist, once of *The Observer*, has died. Robert Armstrong writes: 'A staunch member of our Society, she will be remembered beyond all else as a poet who threw wide her home to all true poets. Her beloved "Saturdays" included many of our members and she nurtured much brilliant work. How deeply she will be mourned.'

The announcement of Lord Vansittart's death emphasized how widespread has been the influence of poetry and the striving towards poetry-making in the ambitious early years of distinguished men and women. Robert Vansittart was the author of several volumes of verse before he joined the diplomatic service and made his mark in affairs of State. But, alas, poetry and politics seldom thrive together.

Across the world another famous man has had the ambition to be a poet. Mao Tse-Tung, the Ruler of China, is a contributor to a new poetry magazine in Peking. Eighteen of his poems are published there for the first time, but they appear to have been offered by Mao with a certain hesitation – would that all verse-writers would hesitate before submitting their MSS.! – for he confessed to the editor that he thought young people would find unsuitable the classical style in which they are written.

*

Our Annual Luncheon again. 'More successful than ever' was the unanimous verdict of all who attended the last one. May the Eleventh is the date. Book it now. Please turn to page 113 for this year's announcement. Urgent.

*

Gratefully and with pleasure we announce a bequest of money from the late Miss Mary Lillian Lloyd, associated with this society for many years.

In this fitting and most welcome way our work on behalf of Poetry has been remembered, and we take the opportunity of repeating here what the

Rev. F. Pratt Green said at the Annual General Meeting about making a Will. 'It is almost a debt of honour to leave something to those societies whose work you have admired, supported, and want to see continued for the benefit of future generations. So you leave £100, or £50, or £25 to – well, to The Poetry Society of Great Britain, for example. Not that you are really doing anything at the moment, at least nothing more than instruct your solicitor, who looks as if a little poetry would do him a lot of good.'

But suppose you've already made your Will? Add a codicil, is Mr. Pratt Green's advice, so please turn to the Prelude, July–September, last year.

*

Master of the Incorporated Guild of Hairdressers, Wigmakers and Perfumers, Mr. F. Grein, has told us something. 'The truth is that women don't make painters, artists, or poets.' Changing the subject, let us listen to Mr. Maurice Wiggin, television critic of *The Sunday Times*: '*Under Milk Wood* was written for sound radio . . . It beats me that anyone should have thought it possible to add something – or even not to lose something – by making the place and its people visible in the flesh.' Changing the subject again . . . a Paris critic has deplored the work of M. Anouilh: recently 'the author was already showing signs of a distortion of viewpoint bordering on the pathological in his obsession with the vilest aspects of human nature. The benevolent side of humanity, with which the greatest dramatists have always balanced their satire, seemed hardly to exist for him.' Our younger writers, in prose and poetry alike, have been warned.

Mr. Peter Ustinov always speaks wisely. 'There is something new in the wind,' he declares, 'a resurgence of light and air, of poetry and of colour.' Wisely, too, the President of the Royal Society, Sir Cyril Hinshelwood, has spoken: 'I am not quite happy about the present trend in this country of the relation of the arts and science in education. They do not seem to be getting any closer together.' And the Bishop of Chester provides a footnote: 'We are rapidly reaching so strange a situation that we cannot speak to one another about the work we are doing because it is so highly technical that even the very phrases we use are meaningless to the majority of people.' Six quotations, these, for the reader's scrap-book, all of significance.

*

'From Yorkshire to the Annual Luncheon,' writes a Member, 'may be a long way, but what do two hundred miles matter when at the London end something is promised that I wouldn't miss anyhow? Like scores of others I have made a Maytime habit of it!' See page 113.

*

Postscripts. – 'I hope to do my bit for Poetry in Vancouver.' – So wrote Kelty Macleod of our Readings Committee in her farewell message on sailing in February (*bon voyage!*) for Canada . . . Richard Church has received the honour of the C.B.E. We of The Poetry Society offer him our felicitations . . . Phoebe Hesketh gave a broadcast during March in the B.B.C. early morning programme, 'Lift Up Your Hearts' . . . The article 'Voice and Verse', of which the first part appears in this number, was originally given as a lecture to our Teachers' Conference on January the Fourth . . .

EDITORIAL BOARD

AN ODE TOWARD MUSIC

JOHN SMITH

I have heard so much music; and my head and my heart
Throb perpetually with unresolved sound,
So that, walking in the morning in the green air of April
In cool woods with beech-leaves uncurling
I am aware of the melody of flutes;
And if a bird should rise to the sun, whether singing
Or content to display the arabesques of his wing
It would be a grace-note softly tuning the lambent air.

Or if I walked, as I believe all things possible,
Across water, on the little waves rippling,
There would be harp glissandi, and here and there
If a fish should leap to a fly, a curling
And silver salvo of trumpets.
The landscape, being less subtle than that water
Would spread away in sustained chords and, at the horizon,
Would ascend, like choral preludes, a fugue of mountains.

Being drunk with music my branched limbs and veins
Assume no shape as of a tree walking
But like a fountain flow, forever shifting and sliding,
Gliding all ways away, always the blood ringing;
And the ten stops of my hands
Changing the key of the world, assembling and breaking.
For the trombone bray of the sun golds the sky with its calling
And the little notes of the guitar are the stippling rain falling.

Where midges like dotted quavers jig in marsh meadows
And all the sounds are singing of high summer,
I find the world is a dance; the brazen beams on the water
Are bouncing ronds of sound, scherzi of lightning
Dizzying the sense, that sways
Forever in its order and disorder of sound.
And I could wish, at the last, to be at rest from all this beauty
And sleep without music, drowned in a pause of the world.

Drowned in a pause of the world, washed over by water
In a profound deep, silent as death,
Lulled by lower than wave eddies, drowned, drowned all the way down
In the dark, unechoing
Silent places of death,

Where there is no music, no life; where the heart stops;
Where the song of the blood is stilled, where the chill
Mathematics of death build formal structures of quiet.

There might I put that music by. Ah, put it by?
Those waves that rocked me under the rich sun?
Cast off all sound? Accept the ultimate death?
But who puts music by puts only music by
That is not music, but merely the trappings of it;
The fret and fury as the dead, who put aside life,
Put by only the worn-out husk of it; for we move
Toward music that lies beyond sound; to life beyond living.

For the silence to which we reach is not quiet but music;
That music the deepest silence of the soul,
As the death to which we strive is the ultimate life,
But life that wears the forbidding garments of death;
For these are the inmost heart, the core of things.
And where the profoundest silence broods, Oh the music soars
In miracles of praise; and in omniscient death
Ah, it is there, in the hiddenmost place, leaps life.

It is there where the soul is radiant with sound I would be.
The being entire, not becoming, but found
In the essential light of the world, moving and motionless,
Silent and singing, calm in the circle of wisdom,
Not rapt by harmony; the harmony itself;
The point of creation where nothing lies between.
For there where at last the first true marriage is
The beholder becomes the beheld, and the singer the song.

*

POEMS ABOUT MUSIC

Poems about Music, not exceeding thirty lines each, were invited last year for one of our Prize Competitions – ‘The Geoffrey Tankard Contest’, and the closing date for entries was 31st January last.

The response has been overwhelming, the number of contestants actually reaching three figures, and the distinguished Professor of Music (a Poet himself and a Friend of Poetry) who offered the awards has approved our postponement of the result until the July–September issue.

TWO POEMS

LADY WENTWORTH

THE LILAC FLOWER

Behold the lilac blossom in the dew
Of early sunrise and the mists of night,
When youth awakens in that heavenly light,
And every living thing is born anew.
Wings of the dawn night's fleeting shades pursue,
Rays spun of fairy gold in worlds of white,
Leaf, cloud and blossom, pearl and malachite,
With changing skies of opalescent blue.

Who, in the springtime of eternity,
Shall look beyond the glory of that hour
Spent in Love's meadow spread with daffodils?
Who, in those gardens of anemone,
Steeped in the perfume of the lilac flower,
Shall listen for the thunder of the hills?

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

Do not this evil thing, nor justify
The deed with argument in praise thereof,
Saying the world is thus, and we must move
As moves the worldly throng, nor question why.
If thou betray thine honour, how shall I
Believe in any God, when all I love
And have enthroned in heaven, shall soulless prove,
Itself divine, divinity deny.

Nobility is thine of breed and race,
Which, save thyself, no foe hath power to mar;
But in this evil deed thy beauty is
Dishonoured more than common souls' disgrace;
Because the sun is greater than a star,
And thou a different clay to all of these.

TO A YOUNG ACTRESS

FOR ELIZABETH

F. PRATT GREEN

What news, Elizabeth, what good news!
The paper critics, whose fingers
Unfroze to applaud you, were quick
To detect your poise, your artistry,
Your sense of character. So pose
For cameras, O sophisticated woman
Of nineteen, but inwardly
Be ingenuous as a Christmas rose!

They should be laid by in lavender,
These first notices, with photos
That fade. You will ask, long after,
'Is that girl, hugging her success,
Really myself?' – and recollect
How as a child you used to mime
In mirrors. Did you ever
Find it difficult to put on an act?

Chided for being late, or dilatory,
You stared. How could we guess
You were Margot Fonteyn unsteadily
Balancing on her immortal toes,
Or Anna Neagle descending the stairs?
Now, in this new world of yours,
Is everything second nature?
Do you forget to give yourself airs?

When Art's a racket (and still Art),
Shield your spirit against cruel
Winds that blow in your world. Yes,
Walk on like a Zen philosopher
If your name's too small on the bill,
Pricking the bubble reputation
Before it begins to fill.
As it will, Elizabeth, as it will!

BALLADE OF HOLIDAY ABERRATION

(To the tune of 'The Loveliest Night of the Year')

H. S. MACKINTOSH

In July, in July at Torquay
The arrow of Eros was sped,
Transfixing a lady and me,
A lady, alas! who was wed;
Our love was a flame to be fed,
But because there was such an expanse
Of salt water around us she said
It was 'only a seaside romance'.
By the sea, all the experts agree,
Our ethics are apt to be shed:
The cuckoo is out for a spree
And the Beautiful Wife is 'misled';
O where has that rhapsody fled?
Did the moonlight conflict with finance?
No! No! it's all over and dead –
It was only a seaside romance.
It is always a story of three
In nine-tenths of the novels I've read:
The convulsions of A, B and C,
And the passions of X, Y and Z;
However the tangle is spread
You will find (for a guinea – Gollancz,
Or for twenty-five bob – Bodley Head)
It was only a seaside romance.

Envoi

Princess, though my heart may have bled
At the time, I have taken my stance
On the stone that you gave me for bread:
It was only a seaside romance.

WINDOW-DISPLAY ARTIST

JANE SCOTT PARSONS

She makes a landscape of her dress
Display, her dark and delicate eyebrows bent
On each effect in concentrated frown;
Her mission, colour for the old grey town.
Beneath so dedicated, bright intent
Commercialism resembles holiness.

The hordes of women-folk are hers to win,
The bargain hunters struggling for a place.
They watch, enthralled, her long slim hands caress
Soft fold and frill to final loveliness.
And I affirm not greed but grace
Shall woo them, one by one, and lure them in.

She makes a private drama of this gown
Display, each smiling, scarlet-lipped request
A favour to the nymphs who shadow her
With swift response, now here, now there;
Or run or stay, whichever serves her best,
Unconscious of the hunched, admiring town.

She makes a challenge of her colour schemes,
Fencing with all the dull of eye and heart.
Her gazers turn to find the long drab street
A gay parade for lilting feet,
Their homes imagined palaces of art
Where youth sees visions, and the old dream dreams.

THE OLD GODS

J. G. SPENCER

The priests long since have gone, the crowds departed;
Only the altar stands upon the lonely hill;
And yet I know, in spite of later learning,
The gods, so long ignored, are living still.

Fear it may bring, and consolation,
That strange, remote, and fierce though they may be,
At times, the gods, in their accustomed places,
Will still reveal themselves to such as me.

Take then, O pagan gods, a pilgrim's worship,
Drawn to your shrine, unconscious of his need;
Teach him to know your Dionysiac secrets,
Make him forget a later, narrower creed.

Destroy the crust of false interpretations,
Remove the blindness of these later years.
O pagan gods, here in your ancient temple
Accept the living sacrifice of tears.

THE OLD ADVENTURE

WILFRID THORLEY

Who would not die to these slow days
And thrill again with ancient awe
To see amid their rocky maze
The sirens that Ulysses saw?

The sea is silver on the rocks –
The crouching rocks that comb the sea's
Long silver sweep of siren-locks
Agleam above lost argosies.

The menace of things imminent
Grows bright with Grecian swords again;
The air of the wide bay is rent
With cries of slayer and of slain.

O stranded ship sail out to find
The golden trophy of the Greek!
O weary modern man unbind
The limbs where strength is still to wreak!

The golden fleece is still ungot;
O younger Argonauts, aboard!
And brave again the sirens' grot
And bring again the golden hoard!

THE VIRGIN IN THE ROSE GARDEN

(Remembering a painting by one Stefano da Verona, 'Da Zevio')

M. E. MASON

Beneath the golden sky
A trellised wall
The garden space encloses
Wherein the Virgin is enthroned, star-crowned
Among the Roses.

And more: to grace
The marvels of the orchard-place
Angels around her fly,
And peacocks perch,
And fowls on curious wing,

Amid the twining leaves about her feet
'A brood of Nightingales – let slippe – to sing
With cheerful noyse and sweet' . . .

And all
The radiance of the blossoming trees
Delights the smiling Babe upon her knees . . .

so long since does it seem
The artist wrought, in prayer and lowliness
His dream . . .
And still each century to each discloses
The fragrance of the garden . . . and the Roses.

CAR-PARK

JEAN BOWMAN

This was a quiet place once;
Under a wide sky; of an endless green,
With waving heads of sorrel in the grass,
And a cloudy, tumbling stream
That wandered, talking to itself, between
The chalk cliffs, and was lost upon the shore.

There were star-daisies here,
And skylarks sang the whole day long,
Beating like hearts, throbbing out of sight
In the depths of summer sky:
When the wind fell, the thin ribbon of song
Was bound in the heavenly quiet.

A small pool, that was an ocean
To a child, where frogs met
To sit hidden in the grass, to think and dream;
With tall reed and yellow sea-poppies,
And a carpet of cool, wet
Moss, soft, velvety green.

This was a quiet place once,
Serenely beautiful and lonely,
Where the sea came to beat
Its muffled murmur on the shore,
A place of endless green . . . now only
The sky is the same, emptied of larks.

SONG OF THE WOMAN OF TRASNA

STEPHANIE BOYD

When you come wooing
the wind brings the creaking
of rowlocks and dipping
of oars to the island

When you come wooing
the gulls begin wheeling
and scream round the mooring
because of the stranger

When you come wooing
I bend to the baking
in case you might think it
too bold to be waiting

When you come wooing
I know without looking
the one who is coming
is you by the footsteps

When you come wooing
I find myself aching
to be your heart's answer
and have its safe-keeping

All through the wooing
I know before morning
by all and for nothing
you count yourself winner
but whether a sinner
or saint in your loving
it's you who keep losing
and I who am winning

So after wooing
row back to the mainland
with shame of your wanting
absolved by my blessing
and hate of your taking
undone by my giving
until the tide changes
before the next wooing

CLARITY VERSUS OBSCURITY IN POETRY

KENNEDY WILLIAMSON

Obscurity in poetry may spring from a variety of causes of which we shall here consider six – four that are discreditable, and two that may be condoned, and even applauded.

(1) A common cause of obscurity in poetry is a condition that may be called *Author's Familiarity*.

The idea in the poet's mind is so clear to him that he fails, in effect, to realize that he is not giving his readers adequate equipment for receiving it. He, as creator of the idea, is omniscient about it, and may write glancingly and allusively, as if readers had an equal familiarity. A poet who is gifted with great imagination, may be signally lacking in one kind of imagination – the faculty of seeing his poem as it will arrive at the reader's end.

Such a poet could be taught a valuable lesson by the cinema usherette. She may have been in the building for hours, and her eyes have long ago accustomed themselves to the darkness. She can see quite well. When, however, a patron arrives, she does not attribute to him the same degree of vision as she now has. She knows that the theatre will present to him a wall of darkness, and hence she plies her torch and gives the requisite guidance.

Yet the poet who has already spent a long time in company with the ideas that he wishes to convey, may behave like a stupid usherette who, because lapse of time has caused the theatre to be visible to her, assumes an equal accommodation of the vision in the newcomer.

(2) A further source of obscurity is a lack of the prophet's mission.

Some poets are concerned with self-expression but not at all with communication. In their ivory towers they declare in effect 'This is what I want to say, and this is the form in which I shall say it.' They are unconcerned with persuading or convincing or enlightening their readers.

A person may lift a telephone receiver off its cradle and, without having dialled a number, start talking into the mouthpiece. His utterance is certainly self-expression. But nobody is listening; and because the speaker knows that nobody is listening, he is entirely ego-centric. He can say anything he likes; he does not even need to be coherent. Now let us suppose that he lifts the receiver, dials a number, and addresses another person. The flow of his self-expression immediately undergoes various subtle changes. Even though he were repeating the very things he had said before, there would be modulations, accommodations, caused by the presence of the correspondent at the other end. The speaker would now be concerned with the business of getting his message conveyed. His mental eyes

would be focussed upon the other person, not upon himself. He would instinctively feel that modes of utterance which were satisfactory for self-expression, were not quite in the idiom for communication. He would become, for the time being, an altruist instead of an egoist.

(3) Yet another source of the obscure is over-subjectivity.

In one of her poems, Dame Edith Sitwell refers to 'the Martha-coloured scabious'. I assume that to most readers this combination of words means nothing whatever. The poet has obligingly explained that she had a nursemaid named Martha who used to wear a cashmere gown that was smocked and honeycombed as is the scabious, and had a colour exactly that of the flower.

Now, if one wishes to do commerce with other minds, one must employ accepted currency and not offer coin which has been struck in one's own private mint and from moulds that have a large element of individual caprice. If one never happened to have met Dame Edith's nursemaid, with her peculiarities of apparel, and if one's own nursemaid was named, let us say, Nancy, and wore flame-coloured jumpers, one is indeed seriously handicapped in an attempt to understand 'the Martha-coloured scabious' – just as Dame Sitwell would fail to understand my meaning, if I wrote about 'the Nancy-hued nasturtium'.

It is not the ideal to express thoughts which are already universally understood, for that way lies banality; but surely we ought to express ideas which most people are capable of understanding. The best originality consists in expressing novel ideas in completely intelligible form, and not in making allusions to some inner shrine of experience to which no one else has been privy.

(4) A fourth type of obscurity springs from the author's knowledge that his thoughts are so trivial that he dare not let them be seen in all their pathetic meagreness.

There is always the chance that obscurity will be mistaken for profundity. A generous-minded reader who cannot make head or tail of a poem, may assume that the fault is in him. There are to-day scores of alleged poets who have nothing to say, but have yet achieved a reputation by the simple device of complicating the saying of it. Clear water may have a great depth, but six inches of water may seem deep if it is muddy. Hence poets of low mentality may profit by their readers' high credulity.

All these four causations of obscurity in poetry are in the nature of error, and the resulting obscurity is therefore blameworthy.

Let us, however, turn to two causations which may seem legitimate and even laudable.

(5) A poem may be obscure in its lower strata, though the top stratum is perfectly lucid.

A poem may take the form of a parable whose surface meaning is quite clear, but about whose underlying significance there is left, deliberately, room for speculation. An instance is de la Mare's *The Listeners*. Here the immediate portrayal is capable of no misinterpretation. Indeed, language is used in such a way as to produce a picture having sharp and unforgettable images. We can see the horseman dismounting in the moonlit forest; his horse champing at the grasses on the ferny floor; the silent house overgrown with creeper and silted up with dust. We can hear the resounding clamour of the horseman's knocking; his repeated cry, 'Is there anybody there?'; the clinking of the horse's harness as he moves a-grazing; then the sharp contact of boot with stirrup, and the long diminuendo of the departing hooves when at last the rider has abandoned his quest.

There is not a single item which has not an uncanny clarity; but what does the poem 'mean'? There is no kind of agreement as to the deeper significance. To some of us the traveller and the house will stand for certain things, and to others for quite different things. The value of such a poem as this lies in its universality, since we can all make our several interpretations according to our souls' need.

Here then we have what may be thought a beneficial type of obscurity; but let any who think of employing it, remember that there is no obscurity along the surface stratum.

(6) Finally, obscurity may spring from a feeling in poets that all available language has become trite.

What do we mean by a cliché? A cliché is a phrase which has become so hackneyed that it ceases to register any meaning on the mind. The wording is so familiar that the mind is temporarily lulled into a stupor. If anyone began to say 'England expects that . . .' the mind would immediately relax its alertness, since one knows so certainly what is to follow. The trouble with clichés is that they glance off the consciousness, as does a splinter of shrapnel from a bomb-proof shelter.

The last half-century has seen an enormous spread in education. Every child to-day can read or write, or some Education Officer must be placated. Language has thus undergone a universalizing which has never occurred before. The newspaper and the cheap periodical have brought reading matter within the orbit of the humblest citizen. One may logically expect that, sooner or later, a time will come when the whole of language has become cliché.

Consciously or otherwise, some of our contemporary poets may be feeling that such a period has already begun, in which we must take drastic and even bizarre measures if language is to make any impact on the consciousness. Much modern obscurity derives from this half-formulated feeling that straightforward statement may fail of its

purpose. If modern poetry is such that one can make neither head nor tail of it at a first reading, and must bring strenuous thinking to the task of its interpretation, such poetry may be achieving the very aim that the poet intended.

Direct statement is not the only legitimate medium for poetry. Words can be grouped so that they have an associational value, and, without being logically consecutive, release in the reader a train of emotions. It is as valid a function of poetry to evoke a mood as to make a proposition.

COLOUR

RITA SPURR

Coffee-bean her face
Between the dangling ear-rings
Turquoise on filigree,
And green the hat
Enfolding so much sculptured richness.

Brown earth, blue sky, green trees and golden sun.

Serious as stone,
She listens,
The dusky lips
Carving pristine thought.

But suddenly,
A note of quick delight
Has sent a ripple
Over the smooth skin.

The wide nostrils quiver,
The round eyes dance
And sunshine glitters on
The white-rimmed cavern of her mouth,

Till all the room is filled
With sound of tinkling bells
And quickened warmth,

Brown, blue and golden.

A CLOSER WALK

TIMOTHY H. COULSON

Walking
together in the rain
in a cool rapture,
clearing our thoughts in the high wind;
your hair laughs with the leaves,
and your eyes,
your eyes sing to me
with the fresh voice of love,
and could we not live for ever in this way?
We are lost to ourselves,
and, in conjunction,
the low lingering light
pervades our soul:
and, as we walk
gratefully,
we know that God is with us,
with the wind, and the rain,
the high wind, the cool rain.

THE WAY BACK

MURIEL GRAINGER

Lie still, my hands, no longer curled
About the trifles of the world:
The treasures, toys and souvenirs
Your fingers gathered through the years.

Turn, eyes, from this distracting view,
And see the sights that once you knew:
The lovely land; forgotten seas
That children find again with ease.

My ears and lips, be deaf and dumb,
If to that silence there might come
Music that saints and skylarks know
As between earth and heaven they go.

Then will time's tentacles release
Their stranglehold. My heart at peace
Abandons all, and is made free
To recollect eternity.

READING ABBEY

E. B. W. CHAPPELOW

These rough ungarnished walls have felt the shock
Of eight long centuries like weathered rock
And once were gay with painting's frescoed pride;
These columns, champfered once, bore up the wide
Magnificence of vaulted arches where,
Though open now throughout the changing year
To rainy sky or windy or levin-riven
Or the calm azure of an unclouded heaven,
Gospel and psalm greeted the hallowed air,
Chaste reverence sent up both praise and prayer
With organ-roll and silver censer swinging
And all the sweet accompaniment of singing,
By jewelled shrine and pictured tapestry,
To that high Love which all things holds in fee.
O littleness of man! The adulterer came,
Despoiled and made the beauty but a name,
And left, mute victim of unlawful lust,
The very House of God a house of dust.
What shades must haunt each corridor and hall
From that great sacring day majestic
When Hugh, who first the abbot's mitre wore,
Friend of the people, helper of the poor,
And tamer of the proud, illustrious he
For learning both and noble ancestry,
Took from the royal hands of stern Beauclerc
The shepherd's crook to do the shepherd's work,
To him,* who unto Him in whom his hope
Was anchored, in that same strong hope gave up
Mitre and life upon the gallows-tree,
Another Hugh, for all the world to see!
But though both armoured knight and king have gone
Into the deep night of oblivion,
Old John the monk† to English hearts yet dear,
Still sends down time his merry note and clear,
His prick-song that the frozen heart can win
With joyous *Sumer is icumen in*
Though gone the abbey's beech and elm and oak,

* The last abbot of Reading.

† John of Fornsete.

From whose thick leaves the cuckoo's challenge broke,
Gone fragrant herb-plot, gone the yellow corn
Whence the lark soaring hailed the risen morn,
And darling spring no more with magic breath.
Her ancient wonder works on holt and heath,
And Reading's stony streets no bird's call know
Nor for his dam the mild calf's plaintive low,
Yet still these ruins speak of Bethlehem
When the gray twilight softly falls on them
Or the dim light of stars, and still proclaim
At pearly dawn the Galilean name,
And when the white light broadens and the sun
Mounts triumphing his sovereign course to run,
Still stand, though bare of pomp, a prophecy
Of Christ's high victory that yet shall be.

HAMPTON COURT

ARTHUR STROVER

Home of Royal Families, Courtiers, Statesmen, Soldiers, Priests,
One of whom, Wolsey, made this palace grand;
Quite the finest in our lovely English land,
Famed in days of old for its tournaments, processions, gigantic feasts:

Here Wolsey lived, and sometimes undoubtedly got some peace
Until his former friendly king got more and more tyrannous in command;
So Wolsey, diplomatic, considered it wise to give up some of his land,
Else, possibly – as in those days – it might have led to immediate
decease:

So the stout king, he got it all; and for a long time after
Royalty roamed the palatial halls, the courtyards, and beautiful
flower-ways,
Enjoying life very well in those picturesque old days
When the Palace was filled with courtly women and men, and love
and laughter:

And now, they have all gone, just as if they had not existed; though
some have left an imprint;
But the river goes running on just by, outliving the lot, in its gaze a
glint.

HAWKE'S TALE OF MOUNT EDGCUMBE*

L. N. JACKSON

At midnight by the Timber Gate,
One fine night in June,
I happened to glance to Barrow Park,
Beneath the setting moon.

A fine night 'twas, a velvet night
And on the hillside clear
All staring at the setting moon
I saw a hundred deer.

I crawled towards the Barrow Clump,
Whose shadow gave me hide,
And saw a second line of deer
Upon my other side.

And all were staring fixedly
And, following their gaze,
I raised my night glass to my eyes
And saw, to my amaze:

A stamping cony circled by
A myriad points of light
That danced; and under three brown rings
Swirled in the clear June night.

Better to look I raised one knee
But recked not of the deer.
Gone in a flash were these and all.
Only the moon shone clear.

I kept a daily watch, and scarce
A fortnight was to pass
Before a pixie ring appeared
— A ring of fresh green grass.

'Tis fungus makes a pixie ring',
I've heard the gentry say
Who never saw the bobbing lights
Round where the cony lay.

* This story has been told by Lord Mount Edgcumbe who had it from his retired keeper, Harry Hawke.

THE POETRY OF GEOFFREY JOHNSON

GILBERT THOMAS

It would be putting the matter too strongly to declare that we have to-day 'traditional' poets, 'modern' poets, and Geoffrey Johnson. Such overstatement may nevertheless help to set Mr. Johnson in perspective. He may not stand alone; yet few living poets have rendered better service to their art during a period of swift and violent transition. Too many traditionalists continue to write as if no water (or blood) had flowed under the bridges since the time of Tennyson. Too many modernists assume that we are living in a totally new world, having no roots in the past. The extremists at one pole are blind to the necessity for – or the fact of – change. The extremists at the other pole forget that the only constructive change is that which, instead of being imposed from without, springs from inward growth.

Geoffrey Johnson has extended and enriched tradition without deliberate aim or conscious effort. He is an accomplished and often an original technician. But technique and originality are not for him ends in themselves; they are spontaneous developments of an organic whole. They arise naturally from a balance between intellect and emotion, and they are vitalized by spiritual vision that becomes the more universal for being, at the start, so sturdily individual.

Born and educated in the Black Country, this most independent of poets, after achieving an unusual combination of distinctions at London University, taught for many years at a school in Cambridgeshire before his recent retirement to Dorset. He has a fine pictorial sense, and, as a lover of the Fen Country, he gives us, as in 'August Evening' or 'After Rain', poems that remind us of the great East Anglian or Dutch painters; while 'The Mirror' reveals a charming English-Flemish 'interior'. Here is 'Cloud-Wrack':

Tower upon tower of lighted ivory, smiled
The clouds above the hosts of bronzen corn.
The dark red banners of the dock shook wild
With wonder at every magic moment born.
For light, victorious over tempest torn,
Majestic, regal, and augustly mild,
Poured its creations from unemptied horn,
And higher and higher the snow-sierras piled.
The flaming vortex of the light to me
That hour was the first Evening; God had pressed
All warring powers to serve His majesty,
And flung off, lightly as a billow's crest,
A trifle from tremendous energy,
Atlas, and Matterhorn, and Everest.

In his ten or eleven volumes of verse* Mr. Johnson provides such a wealth of description, not merely of East Anglian, Black Country, Wessex, and other English scenes, but of French, Austrian, and Italian ones, that further citation of examples, let alone more quotation, is impossible if other aspects of his wide-ranging work are, however inadequately in turn, to be mentioned.

As an English and classical scholar and a student of history, he is thoroughly at home in the past. As a passionate humanitarian and an implicit crusader for international peace and social justice, he is equally alive to the needs, dangers, and opportunities of the present:

Let us rejoice by all means that our race
And tongue are also Shakespeare's, Newton's, Wren's.
But these long born before us all are men's,
Nor can we live by their transmitted grace.
Ours be the prouder joy, that tricks of place
And time have given us more disastrous fens
Of dark to enlighten than their wits and pens
Ever divined; for the grim years we face
Hold, too, this rarest promise – that by our
Valour of spirit and ardour of our sons
Alone, shall truly reincarnate power
And its transcendence over fleets and guns
Inspire the world to universal flower
Outsplendouring dreams, even of these mighty ones.

Here, again, in 'A Child Writing', present and past are naturally linked:

All the recording race
Burns in this little face
Half buried by fallen hair;
The Egyptian scribe, the Greek
Carving on virgin wax
His characters antique,
Young Joseph entering sacks
Of corn in his father's book,
The child Virgil, and Pope
Shaping his infant hope,
Each goosequill letter and hook
To the page's end, are there.
And when he lifts his eyes
To the dreams he murmurs of,
And his fleets of fancies melt
Beyond his verbal reach,
All that we ever felt

* The Quest Unending (1930), Changing Horizons (1932), Mother to Son (1935), The Scholar (1936), The New Road (1939), The Timeless Land (1941), The Mountain (1946), The Ninth Wave (1948), The Iron Harvest (1950), The Heart of Things (1952), The Magic Stone (1955: see review, Oct.-Dec.).

Of longing and surmise
In launching out our love
To an invisible beach
Is in his lighted look.

This charming little poem reveals Mr. Johnson's gift for portraiture. Sometimes, as in 'Albert Schweitzer', the portrait is admirably direct. Sometimes, no less successfully, it is subtle; while the poet can be gay no less than grave, and often both together, as in the study – half ironic, half sympathetic – of Aunt Mirabelle, who, to keep up her end, invents or exaggerates her family history or her own prowess in various fields. At other times the writer's deep compassion colours, without distorting, his portraits, as in 'The Boy with a Thorn', in which one sharply delineated individual is seen as a symbol of the whole suffering human race.

Over and over again, whatever his theme or mood, Geoffrey Johnson's wholeness emerges. The sensuous poet is apt to forget the spirit; the spiritual poet tends to be narrow and didactic; the intellectual poet too often gives us a waste land. Mr. Johnson does justice alike to sense, spirit, and intellect; and if he sometimes plays off one against another, it is only that final harmony may ensue. In a group of married love poems he challenges in turn all who would destroy life by dividing it. Thus, having momentarily surrendered himself to 'our master intellects of Arctic gloom', he suddenly sees, through the window, that 'the skies are heavenly warm and clear', that the garden is alive with Shakespearian colour and frolic, and that

Outside, my Mistress in the parted bloom,
Almost like one of his own women, sound
As an apple, merrier than a girl of twelve,
Is laughing; space becomes one chiming round;
Her fountain-voice goes up, and never stops
Showering her cheeks with pure maternal drops
Of pity for this very foolish child
Who hoped for comfort from their Intellectual Wild.

Come hither, Wits, who, mumbling darkness, delve
In your own innards for the precious light,
Here lose yourselves, and feast your starving eyes
On her ripe mouth, her white throat backward thrown,
Laughing at you, my foibles, and your own.

For arid intellect the necessary antidote may be a warm bath of sense. Yet sense must equally be disciplined if spirit is not to suffer. In 'Without Words' the poet describes a perfect April morning. Trees and flowers are at their most delicate stage of burgeoning.

Yet, like my Mistress, ask no words of me:
Why should a man, whose eyes and heart are filled
With her perfections, ever wring his soul
For words to hold them, smothering love till killed
By thought's excess or passion's uncontrol?
Why shed the bloom by fingering the cool tree?

Mr. Johnson has given us much rollicking or dainty light verse; while satire – sometimes based on his close study of animals – repeatedly breaks in. 'The Cock' presents an unforgettable picture of Chanticleer as he awakes in the morning, 'all pride and battlemented crest', and the poet suggests what fun it would be to feel oneself, just for an hour, 'lord of a cosmos bounded by a wall'. And here, in similar vein, is 'Philosophers':

Six roan bullocks with a black one in the middle
Chew the cud solemnly, wag the lower jaw;
Couched in a pensive gloam the late rays riddle,
They behold the majesties of metaphysic law.

Everything is horn and hoof in their bovine heaven;
Man, the comic biped, forking down the hay,
Struts, a shape unreal, to the Mystic Seven
Dreaming of the Mangold that passes not away.

Complacent bullocks or the strutting cock, supposing it to be his own crowing that produces the dawn, have their spiritual counterparts among men; and, whether in lighter or more serious style, Mr. Johnson depicts the tragi-comedy of human self-sufficiency and self-importance. Without illusion he sees both evil and good:

As on a screen, that endless battle plies
Of Beauty bannered and the Beast uncouth,
Gigantic postures of Satanic lies
And archangelic trumpetings of Truth.

Yet, while this battle may seem to be 'endless', many poems breathe a quiet and reasoned faith in the final victory of Love and Truth. If never a conventionally religious poet, Mr. Johnson is a deeply spiritual one. While 'lined with shrewd wisdom from the ancient earth', his work with equal surety touches 'the high eternal things'. 'The Strange Land', 'The Shepherd', and 'The Sower' are among numerous poems which, in vigorous yet sensitive modern idiom, set forth the Christian parables as vitalized for the writer by his own experience.

And now, since we must end, let it be with this poignantly self-revealing sonnet taken from the poet's latest book, *The Magic Stone*. It is called 'The Dumb Appeal':

Frozen into himself, head bowed to breast,
This bird who contemplates till light is low
The stony-hearted silence of the snow
Once flung on Spring and Autumn warmths his best
Of music. Now from iron east and west
No crumb of comfort flecks his wastes of woe;
He must endure till merciless and slow
Ingratitude shall stiffen him to rest.
The man who contemplates this bird, and sees
In small an image of himself that flung
All the rich tumult of his energies
In a high cause for nothing, holds his tongue
Likewise from railing on the skies that freeze,
And leaves with God the poems he has sung.

There we may fittingly leave a poet who, ignoring all literary fashions or cliques, has been undeviatingly true to his own vision and his own ideals, alike in life and art.

THE WHITE CYCLAMEN

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Mysterious as the moment's breath we draw
Unconsciously within this living-room,
And yet in mystery not ours, this bloom
Has slowly followed her deep inner law,
Till her arched wings of snow without a flaw
Brood Psyche-wise about her secret groom,
The sun, but never can become him, whom
She gazes on in soundlessness of awe.
And we, who thought each other known of each
Through thrills of fire and glooms of commonplace,
And watch this wonder for a moment's grace,
Fall into silence or a stammered speech
As if the love that lighted either's face
Shone from some stranger past all mortal reach.

ECHO

EVELYN ROCHE

If, running swift before the fleet pursuit
Of time, I might one moment dare to glance
Behind, would she be there – the little ghost
Of memory? And do her dreams still dance
Their may-fly joys upon a shaft of sun?
And, sharp beneath her pony's hooves does frost
Yet scent the waking air when day's begun?
Does she still laugh to watch her smoking breath
Play 'let's pretend that all the world's on fire',
And with half-frightened glee impel her horse
To race titanic flames? – Oh, little liar,
Who never knew that truth would fit time's bow
With arrows of pursuit to slay the past
And leave her shadow on the Punjab plains,
A ghost within a dream that could not last.

THE PLANE TREE

(For W.J.)

PAMELA CLEAVER

From the pillows of the high blue bed,
The mirror showed his constant friend,
The tree – the giant plane.
Rising, strong-limbed from the lawn,
Its tallest branches, spreading wide,
Looked down on tiles and chimneypots;
A strong and lovely thing it was
In its unleafed magnificence;
Watched by him now for many years.

It was a dull uncoloured day.
The tall tree, dark on a pond-grey sky,
Was framed in the mirror facing him.
Then, when the light was lessening,
The sun flared low beneath a cloud
And flooded the branches of the tree
With a warmth of coral-coloured light.
The green grass on the distant hill
Shone with all the sap of Spring.

'Look! There's a rainbow. Can you see?'
But no bright curve of the lovely arc
Cut even a corner of his glass.
The others watched it glow and fade
While a starling whistled from the tree.

When the rainbow faded finally
And the bird had flown from the trembling branch,
And only a grey light showed the plane,
He filled the shadows of the room
With rainbows seen and seen again,
With images as clear and keen
As when in the mirror facing him,
Each morning, bathed in the early light
Appears the image of his tree.

SPRING

T. B. ROWAN

The sun comes with swift tapers to the world,
Firing field and tree.
Rivers once held on Winter's bit
Rush to the Spring sea.

Love comes again with syrx and bare foot,
And unbound hair,
Breast curved through the soft embrasures
Of the fleecy air.

The frost, that devil in Earth's beard, is purged,
And the young sun
Runs through the new green wilderness
Crying *Winter's done!*

POETRY SOCIETY SPECIAL

THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON

FOR MEMBERS AND THEIR FRIENDS

will be held at The English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth
House, 37 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.

SATURDAY, 11TH MAY, 1957 (See page 113)

ELIZABETHAN LAMENT

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Age is no bar to love; a summer sun
Sometimes is freshened by a springtime breeze.
Full grace with youth can oft in harness run,
Blending old wines with new will thirst appease.
Then wherefore are you to my favours blind?
Why say that I am old enough for death?
No creaking limbs as yet my ardours bind:
I sing your praises with unfailing breath.
Methinks your reason has found other cause,
And reason's wit is pierced by Cupid's dart.
A song of youth has called and bids you pause
To spurn the ancient pledges of my heart.
If rhymes of mine have now the cause displayed,
Shall Summer weep if Spring's illusions fade?

REQUIEM

GERALDINE MIDDLETON

This, the untiring agony of an endless Lent;
The heavy scent of Easter lilies, half in bloom,
The fickle fragrance of the daffodils . . .
This, and the unbearable beauty of forsythia stars –
The mocking cuckoo tells us it is Spring.
And soon, no doubt, the poet, too, will sing,
For *nothing is so beautiful as Spring!*

This Spring has come, like any other,
Heralding with seven sad weeks an Easter Day,
Rejoicing, jubilant, a gay Bank Holiday.
They say that Winter's past,
That poverty and sickness do not last,
There is no need to be afraid of dying,
And those who speak of fear are only lying;
When birds do sing . . .
They say: *Sweet lovers love the Spring.*

Oh love, that breaks my heart so easily,
Must these, my Easter flowers, wither too?

VOICE AND VERSE

MARJORIE FFRANGCON-DAVIES

I

The cultivation of a good voice, the faculty by which great ideas are communicated – apart of course from the medium of the printed word – is of tremendous importance in an age when barriers and limitations in every direction are rapidly disappearing. Not only in verse-reading is the cultivation of a good voice worth while, but as part of the make-up and equipment of every cultured man and woman it is almost essential.

Even a short excursion into the subject opens up fascinating objectives, the pursuit of which brings rich rewards in perception and comprehension of art in all its forms. The present age is so incredible, with developments of great magnitude in all the so-called material sciences, that it is a pleasure to be called upon to consider at length a subject the analysis of which can help to balance these unfoldments, by discoveries of some importance in the fields of aesthetics and ethics.

If my remarks develop in a sequence which to some may seem strange and unaccustomed, I hope you will suspend judgment for a while. They are based on a line of reasoning developed by my father, David Ffrangcon-Davies, in a work on singing, published in 1905, and entitled *The Singing of the Future**. He was a clergyman before he started his musical career in his mid-thirties. He had learned the needs of a reader or preacher before he analysed the technique of a singer. In some measure he found them similar, and it is his line of thought I have followed.

It may be helpful to say here that these ideas do not conflict in essence with any normal method of voice production, but perhaps they will stimulate emphasis on aspects of approach to the subject.

I do not deal primarily with the formation of tone, the placing of tone, and the use of consonants and vowels detached from the thought-processes by which they are formed. Rather my task is to endeavour to approximate the thought of the subject-matter we are dealing with, and then search for the means needed effectively to communicate it. Each of us would like to cultivate a voice adequate for the reading of poetry or for acting; and here it may also be emphasized that such an achievement is possible for anyone who can

* An abridged version, with a preface by Ernest Newman and a biographical sketch by Marjorie Ffrangcon-Davies, was published in 1938 under the title *David Ffrangcon-Davies, His Life and Book*, from which the quotations in this essay are made. Copies of the first edition may be had from Miss Ffrangcon-Davies, Thatches, Finchingfield, Essex.

subdue himself and follow a clearly defined though uncomplicated method of procedure. Precisely the same is true of singing. If we can find a method, a technique, whose basic principle is not continually swamped in a multiplicity of details, we shall begin aright. This basic principle would act as an all-embracing law and guide, stimulating us in any simple exercises we may see fit to adopt – exercises which are a means to an end, and not the end in itself.

Even the possession of a fine natural voice is not in itself complete equipment for our needs, even when it is accompanied by an adequate intelligence. And here it may be helpful to clarify that need. Is it not, in place of a series of sketches, or disjointed splashes of colour, to produce a unified impression of what the poet's conception was? The unvarying canon of interpretation – that a reader or reciter seeks to convey the creations of genius, and of men of lesser stature, in such a way that the listener is enabled to hear and feel mentally, what the author felt when placing his creation on record – is self-evident. Therefore it is a limitation for the reader to rely on any particular vocal quality, or inflection, in order to create an effect, or overshadow what the author is endeavouring to communicate. To make the voice the tool of any one sentiment, even though that sentiment may seem to be a safe investment, is misguided.

Our aim, if we are to be really of service to our author, is to be able to characterize; and this leads us to a grasp of that fundamental and uncomplicated law which I hinted at, a law so simple as to pass by almost unnoticed. We must use our ability to *think*. This demand becomes more clearly defined when I add that students of the voice should begin their studentship with singing and speaking thoughts, never with merely making sounds. They should be able to give the words their correct atmosphere, and speak them with verbal purity and incisiveness.

Here we must begin to understand that breath also plays a part. Not that there are two kinds of breathers, one breath-control being for ordinary mortals, and another imparted at times at great expense by highly favoured persons to those who wish to act or read. The contented sigh is the basis of the cultivated breathing we need, the same sigh that escapes you on a lovely sunny morning when you say 'How beautiful it all is – I'll run upstairs and make the beds.' No special observation is required to see if you can get there. Up you go!

So it is with reading or acting. You learn only through thoughtful concentration on your subject, to let your intake be regulated by punctuation or emotional stress. A slight self-consciousness persists for a short time, while we learn that to read a tender love-lyric we do not need deep draughts of ozone, such as we might feel inclined to gulp if we were fortunate enough to be walking along the pier

at Brighton. Quite a small amount of breath *controlled* is enough. Breathing becomes automatic, and with it also dawns the realization that it is never wise to speak out of the back of your neck – or the front either. No; let the whole of yourself into the secret, as it were; control easily at the diaphragm and let the muscles at chest, throat and face be free from tension.

Turning again to singing we find that the magic term ‘bel canto’ is sometimes regarded as just pretty, sustained sound. But the objective of past singers was not mere beauty of sound, but justness of expression. It is sometimes assumed that emotional expression confines itself to a general fervour of delivery which may be described as an absence of apathy. I believe there is a school of thought which advocates absolutely no emphasis of any kind, a sort of colourless citation which it is claimed does not interfere with what the poet has to convey. That may be a revolt against wrong emphasis, but it would be difficult to imagine such a method finding acceptance in our world, so full of light and shade.

Emotions must be characterized, and differentiated; and the differentiation of *dramatis personae* understood. It requires subtle and experienced judgment to present gradations of deep emotion without becoming unduly personal about them. But such effort is one of the fundamentals in achieving mastery over the voice. The commonly accepted view that voice comes first and diversified expression second, is a reversal of a natural, intelligent process, and one that limits results.

Musical beauty and ideality of voice reside not in the sensuous beauty of line and colour, but in the power of developing an absolutely just correlation between the voice and the quick vision of thoughtful man. If voices are produced and placed in such a way that a student makes a tone which is something like, but not the word in its purity, then monotony comes in, and to have heard this kind of reader or singer in one poem or song is to have heard him in all.

Without droning or jerkily popping out our words like so many corks, our aim is to give sustained vocal character to our speech, the words being floated out on a current of controlled flowing breath. It is essential for one who wants to read verse, or to act, to use the imaginative reason, the faculty for identification with all sorts of moods and conditions. The use of this faculty was beautifully illustrated by the great Russian dancer Ulanova when she analysed the varying stages of her mental approach to her fabulous dancing. She also emphasized that with the exercise of this thoughtful process came the need also of realizing that true artists, while using their mental capabilities to their utmost, remain among the most disciplined and controlled members of society. The end-product of a perfect artistic achievement is the reward of a life of dedication.

In the warp and woof of the new society growing up around us

the recognition of this faculty of the human mind, put to its right use, can do much to awaken an aesthetic sense, which this very mechanical age tends somewhat to crowd out. It may seem somewhat odd to approach the subject of tone from the vantage ground of an understanding of the emotional or aesthetic demands of one's subject-matter. But as in singing the composer is really one of the best suited to teach voice-production, so the great poet is one to help us in our pursuit. Tone is no mystery. It may seem to be so sometimes, because a beautiful voice can produce almost a hypnotic effect. But the reading of verse is not confined to such an end in the minds of serious readers of poetry.

Pursuit of the aims I have tried to outline is interesting but it is a pursuit that demands persistence and time. We are not always aware that habit, environment, heredity, pin on us certain tendencies which would mitigate against relaxation. 'Relaxation is not flaccidity but the consciousness of conserved energy.' This type of relaxation induces the freedom with which we can make effective use of our faculties.

End of Part One

*

WALTER DE LA MARE : A FURTHER NOTE

DR. MARIE STOPES

Walter de la Mare's enchanting correspondence was even extended to my unique cow Daffodil. She used to receive letters addressed 'Mistress Daffodil, Norbury Park' and they were sometimes addressed in Walter de la Mare's own handwriting, and sometimes in verse, e.g.:

Dear Daffodil I wept to see
Another gift to me –
Tears not of injocundity,
But simply gluttonous glee.
And oh, how kind your mistress is;
I mean, of course, Marie.
Please moo affection's thanks to her
From Walter de.

Another time, to me, about her he wrote: 'Dear Marie, As soon as ever Nature permits I intend to go out into a Thames-side meadow and wreath a triple-triple garland of buttercups for Daffodil's brow. Won't she look nice. And won't she be surprised that they are almost exactly the colour of her delicious butter, and yet that she has never consciously devoured a single bud. Is this true, or is it not true? I've watched a cow in a buttercup field for a (limited) time; and she completely ignored one of my best loved flowers. If so, why?'

No words can express the widespread sense of loss and grief that Walter de la Mare's passing creates.

SEA MUSIC

ELSIE M. BANISTER

Opal and pearl above the fluted shells,
Perpetual in their muted murmuring,
The seas echo the chimes of old church-bells,
And wild, sad cries of sea-birds on the wing.

Domain of sequined fishes, weeds green-grey,
The small, elusive shrimp, the mammoth whale,
Hence drift the tangy airs of newborn day,
As sunlight glints on funnel, mast and sail.

From swift caprice ensues a fantasy –
The wavelets dance and toss and twirl and run,
The shells applaud in castanettean glee,
The seaweed swirls, the fishes dart in fun.

With changeful mood waves crash upon the shore,
Drumming the rocks in pitiless delight,
Resenting their endurance, roar on roar,
Concerting with the winds, in savage spite.

Rude violence spent, there falls a quietude –
Soft, misted tears, cream, foamy spray on jade,
And in nocturnal, penitential mood,
The sea importunes with a serenade.

The viols of the deep exude romance
To thrill the heart as melody beguiles,
The moon and stars gaze down, held in a trance,
And Neptune looks benignly on, and smiles.

*

THANKS FOR 'THE VOICE OF YOUTH'

I

We were very delighted to receive the *Voice of Youth* yesterday with James's poem in it, and I know how very happy he is going to be when he knows about it, as I am sending it on to him at his Preparatory School. Many relatives and friends desire to have a copy, so please may I have thirty more copies of this number, for which I enclose cheque value £2.7.6. being £2.5.0. for the *Voice of Youth* and 2s. 6d. for post and packing.

E.B.

II

I wish to acknowledge the receipt of P.O. which Peter received for his poem which was printed in your last magazine. It was a great thrill to see it in print.

Peter is very fond of your magazine and copies many of the poems into his school anthology book.

J.K. NEW ZEALAND

The Smiling Muse . . .

THE WELFARE STATE

A. E. COPPARD

The hedges are trimmed,
But the sheep have no shade!
The brook is blue-brimmed,
The hedges are trimmed,
But the glare is undimmed,
And so distant the glade.
The hedges are trimmed,
But the sheep have no shade!

FRAGMENT OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY

PAUL SELVER

Astray upon the ravelled fringes of dream,
I glimpse odd vistas of the guileless days
Before the Flood. I hankered after the bays
Already, and I rhymestered by the ream.

Gown-clad, I daily strove with Form IV B:
(Most of them slaughtered now, or aged and bent)
My soul (I had one) murmured a lament
From time to time: 'O, would that I were free.'

I was a backroom lodger, and I dwelt
Two miles past Golders Green – then still bucolic;
Life lacked not gusto, now and then, I felt,
But far too often it was diabolic.
Ah me, the cosmos foundered in eclipse
On mornings baleful with rejection-slips.

* * *

They all came back to me, my trim iambs,
My sonnets (wrought thus early), sundry runes
In sundry patterns: madrigals, lampoons,
Harrowing dirges, jaunty dithyrambs.

They all came back to me: from 'The Spectator',
From 'T.P.'s Weekly' and 'The Daily News',
'The Fortnightly' and kindred staid reviews.
They all came back to me, their glum creator.

They all came back to me, till zest was quelled.
They always would come back, it seemed. Hope died.
But by my plate one morning I beheld
An envelope of orange hue; inside
Plumed words: 'The New Age' in a week or so
Would print my mettlesome verses. *Yo-ho-ho!*

THE HOCKEY FIELD

BETTY PARVIN

When Autumn, with its falling leaves
And vapours strung from streaming eaves,
Goes past again, again I see
That scene that made a mind of me:

There was a green field long ago
Where sodden leaves sank to and fro
And quivered at the stinging clicks
As hockey ball met fighting sticks.
I trembled as the strong and tall
Came pushing past behind that ball,
All glowing girls, all warm and gold!
Irresolute I shook with cold
And stood with feet and fingers numb.
As 'Goal!' they shouted, I was dumb
And yet my heart was one great cry
That I was little, weak and shy.

I dreamed that *I* was strong and tall
And followed an enormous ball
Towards a goal of such great size
Its cross-bar vanished in the skies.
I followed it exulting, glad.
The watchers stamped and screamed like mad.
'Shoot! Shoot!' they roared. The goal drew near.
But then I stopped. I felt no fear.
I stopped. I threw away my stick.
I said: 'This hockey makes me sick'
And left them calmly.

It was plain
I'd never be afraid again.

‘DEAR EDITORS – ’

(The opinions expressed in the following Letters from Readers are not necessarily those of *The Poetry Review*.)

I read Mr. C. Raju's letter in the January, 1957, issue with interest. I cannot agree with C. Raju that the mere casting of a poet's reactions to the world, without or within, into a suitable mould amounts to a poem. Apart from the question of what is meant by a 'suitable' mould, the poet's reactions may be of the most insignificant kind, and no amount of artistry can make a poem out of subject-matter which is trivial and unremarkable.

I suggest that the poet fulfils his tasks when he uses his gift to heighten our consciousness, and enable us to feel the inward truth and abiding significance of what he has to say. It is not his reaction to experience we want, but his ability to transcend the common clay of experience and see through it to the world of eternal values which cannot be catalogued by the scientist.

We know that William Blake realized this truth when he spoke of seeing the world in a grain of sand and Heaven in a wild flower. And were not Shakespeare's lines on a drowned mariner nothing less than an exposition of the same theme?

Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.

EDWARD A. TOEMAN

THE REALITY OF EVIL

Beresford Richards claims that Satan is as real as God. I believe in One God. Satan (evil) has a temporary existence in this finite life, but God (Good) is the only ultimate Reality. Evil is not an Absolute. What is darkness but absence of light?

As to the difference between evil and sin, the former is passive, the latter active. All sin is evil, but evil is not necessarily sin – i.e., the temptation to do evil is not sin.

'A man wholly evil' does not exist, nor one 'statically good' – we are all caught up in the struggle where good-and-evil are intertwined. Berdyaev says: 'Nothingness is immanent in evil' and Samuel Alexander: 'Evil is not therefore wholly evil, but misplaced good.' Dionysius the Areopagite expresses this truth best of all: 'The Good must be the beginning and the end even of all evil things, for the Good is the final purpose of all things . . . Hence evil hath no substantial being, but only a shadow thereof since the Good and not itself is the ultimate object for which it came into existence.'

The Prodigal Son ultimately 'came to himself' – his *real* self. And we are all prodigal sons.

PHOEBE HESKETH

SUCH IS LIFE

I have received your intimation that my poems are not what *The Poetry Review* is looking for.

I can only say that in view of such a letter I am surprised that *The Poetry Review* can get anything at all.

K.M.R.

ONE SYLLABLE OR TWO?

I agree with Clive Sansom that *fire* has two syllables and rhymes with *higher*. This is the one instance where our North-country pronunciation has it: i.e., 'power', 'tower', 'moor' should not be debased into 'par', 'tar', 'more'. To hear our great dark acres of moorland country described by Southerners as the 'mores' nearly drives me mad! PHOEBE HESKETH

Your rejoinder to Clive Sansom was '*Fire*, one syllable . . .' But Shakespeare has:

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn and caldron bubble – (*Macbeth*)

and

That carries anger as the flint bears *fire* – (*Julius Caesar*)

William Blake has:

Bring me my arrows of desire!
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!
Bring me my chariot of *fire*!

And so on. So what?

AMBROSE AGIUS, O.S.B.

As a poetry speaker, I write in support of the contention of Clive Sansom (speaker *and* poet) that the triphthongs in 'fire' and 'higher' are identical. So are those in 'flour' and 'flower', and in 'pure' and 'fewer', to my ear. I think I am speaking for a number of poetry speakers when I say that we *hear* no difference in the vowel sounds of these pairs of differently *spelt* words. In written language, 'higher', 'fewer' and 'flower' are words of two syllables, and 'fire', 'pure' and 'flour' words of one: but are poets guided by eye or ear when writing poetry? And how would they wish their work to be spoken – by attention to spelling or to sound?

MARGARET ARNOTT

'TEN TO THREE'

Thank you very much for commending my sonnet 'To Rupert Brooke'. It was most kind of you and I appreciate your encouragement.

I must explain why I sent in that particular sonnet. I came downstairs one day, and to my surprise, found that my clock had stopped at ten minutes to three! It seemed a good omen and so I decided to enter the sonnet.

I wonder whether other members of the Poetry Society have had a similar experience.

MABEL PARKER

POULTRY, POTTERY, POETRY? . . .

To The President, Pottery Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

Would you please help me in knowing the address of the publishers of the *Pottery Gazette* or *Pottery Review*. If you could please inform me, thanking you in anticipation.

M.I.

EDITORIAL NOTE – Another recent enquiry was addressed to The Poultry Society!

TARDY MEMBER

Go, my cheque to Portman Square
And do your work of healing there.
I'm sure they'll find a use for you
Although you're mighty overdue. P.C.D.

LOVERS OF ITALY

STEPHEN GRAHAM

The Golden Ring, by Giuliana Artom Treves (Longman, 21s.).

In the Casa Guidi where the Brownings lived in Florence there is a tablet commemorating Elizabeth Barrett Browning, 'whose poems forged a golden ring between Italy and England'. Hence the title of this book which tells the story of British residents in Florence during the years of political struggle for freedom - 1847-1862. The translation is by Sylvia Sprigge.

After Byron had dreamed that Greece could be free, other poets dreamed the same for Italy, a recurrent dream. The empire on which the sun never set wished all men to be free. It was at least abhorrent that the race which had given birth to Dante and Petrarch, to Raphael and Michelangelo, should languish under the yoke of Austria. Curious that when at a later date Austria annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina no one shed a tear. Out of that came a world war. Austria had to be stopped, and there is no doubt that the British champions of Italy in the middle of the nineteenth century were right.

However, it is fair to say that only few of the English were enamoured of the Italians they encountered on their travels. They hoped that in freedom a better race of Italians would arise, one more worthy of the great works of art enshrined in their country. The Italians of the time retaliated mentally by considering the English tourists 'all mad', and apart from some very notable exceptions were no doubt right . . . north-north-west mad.

Apart from the Brownings the chief British residents in Florence or visitors during the period of the Risorgimento were Walter Savage Landor, a strong Italophile but wildly erratic; Charles Dickens, who excused the Italians as being 'a people long oppressed and priest-ridden'; John Ruskin, so pre-occupied with art that he ignored the populace; Anthony Trollope, who steeped himself in an imaginary Italy, and produced in his novels the subtle Italian villain and intriguer; and Charles Lever, who arrived with his family riding on piebald ponies escorted by a huge tawny mastiff. The family wore gold-braided hats with peacock feathers, and no doubt looked at least as funny to the Italians as the Italians did to them. We read: 'The colourful Lever cavalcade was one of the most exciting spectacles offered to the Florentines'.

But the chief interest for us in this book is the account of the life of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Browning, and there was nothing comic about them. Rather the reverse: there was something tragic. Florence did not help Elizabeth Barrett Browning to live. The climate and the condition of the houses were not favourable to a consumptive, and Elizabeth's passionate political sympathy with the Italians did not help her. As she lay in bed she suffered each Italian reverse and set-back in her own heart. It is quite likely that Italy cost her at least five years of life. Robert, however, thrived in Italy, and as a poet it was a more powerful inspiration than it was to his wife . . . It will be realized that *The Golden Ring* is rich in matter of interest to readers of *The Poetry Review*.

IN AND OUT OF THE WOOD

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

First Poems, by Minou Drouet. Translated by Margaret Crosland (Hamish Hamilton, 12s. 6d.).

A Case of Samples, by Kingsley Amis (Gollancz, 15s.).

Night Thoughts, by David Gascoyne (Andre Deutsch, 10s. 6d.).

Spectrum, a Spectator Miscellany (Longmans, 16s.).

Catacrok!, by Robert Graves (Cassell, 15s.).

How surprised Manley Hopkins would have been if the young child, Margaret, had completed the inscape of Goldengrove by answering back:

Arbre, mon ami/ mon pareil a moi
si lourd de musique/ sous les doigts du vent . . .
Arbre pareil a moi/ lamentable comme moi . . .
Arbre je viens a toi/ console-moi
d'être seulement moi.

These are the words of Minou Drouet at eight years, from the first poem in her volume, which, in the English edition, gives two of the original French, and all of the rest in a translation, which seems admirable, by Margaret Crosland. Miss Crosland's task must have been especially difficult, since the authenticity of Minou's authorship has been so hotly argued. Now, after various 'tests', insulting alike to the child and her family, the literary world – yes, and even the B.B.C.'s 'Panorama' – have proved Minou to be faery.

No wonder she turns to dogs and trees for comfort. The child prodigy in music or painting is accepted as adult in one department; it is put to the best teachers, its energy carefully bolstered, but let it try playing with words outside the limited vocabulary allowed to the nursery and the grown-ups are shocked and dubious. It is true that some of Minou's work contains expressions like 'nerfs tendus', obvious echoes from the world of the 'abominable grande personne' which she so rightly fears and distrusts; but the child of supernormal sensitivity is supernormally quick to imitate, and Minou gets her own back in the poem 'Impressionable'. It is by her selectivity, her vivid images so patently drawn from a young world, and her enormous pleasure in composing with words, that we must recognize a significant poet, unstained by contemporary pusillanimity.

In another part of the wood, we have one of those angry young men shouting that wanwood leafmeal is all rot; the colours of autumn but decay, but who strangely resents that 'The country to townies is hardly more than nice'; who is simply terrified of Romanticism, asking of vision: 'Let mine be pallid . . . An afternoon long-drawn and silent; let there be a path leading out of sight, and at its other end a temperate zone: woods devoid of beasts, roads that please the foot'. One might have been ready to grant Kingsley Amis that romanticism is escapist, but what is this alternative? I suspect

that Minou knows: 'Road, road I pity you. Moored like a boat to your banks'.

David Gascoyne's *Night Thoughts* begins:

Let those who hear this voice become aware
The sun has set.

This is an extremely gloomy piece, written for broadcasting. It deals mostly with 'Dread of life and fear of Nothing'. For some reason, the first two sections are set out as poetry and the last as prose, although there is no appreciable guidance as to why this should be, unless it is to induce readers to doff one voice and assume another even more portentous. At the very end, we gather that the simple emotions of family life may rescue us from outer darkness, a fact which the humble person in the street has discovered for himself without the aid of rhetoric. Nevertheless, the conception is poetic and the technical accomplishment high. I suppose the B.B.C. Third Programme is satisfied that it could not possibly be described as *Entertainment*.

The *Spectator* omnibus, however, can be. The articles by members of the Middles Club are well chosen and diverse. There are reviews of books, plays and poetry (among the last a pert but penetrating analysis of that bacchanalian romantic, Dylan Thomas, by Kingsley Amis presumably wearing dark glasses and corn plasters for this rough road through an anything but temperate zone: also a good piece on Empson and Auden by Anthony Hartley). There are bits of poetry by members of the Verse Club and bits of prose by John Betjeman who has not yet been elected to the Neo-Empsonians – luckily. And I was glad to see an extract from the Competitions Club which provides an honest weekly income for a few of our more frivolous poets. A good sixteen bob's-worth on the whole.

Better still, and less one bob, is Robert Graves's *Catacrok!* (Majorcan for a spill off the ladder), many items from which have appeared in *Punch* and *The New Statesman*, almost against the author's will, it seems. What a reflexion on our own particular wood it is that his gloom-ridden friends should have morbidly prophesied that this volume might destroy his reputation (hence the title). Reputation for what? Panic?

THREE-DECKER AND SINGLE

GEOFFREY JOHNSON

Poets of To-day III (Scribner's, London, 21s.).

The Pageant of Man, Stanton A. Coblentz (Wings Press, U.S.A., 3 dollars).

The first of these books is the most beautifully produced verse-collection that has appeared for some years. It is the third of the publishers' experiments in printing several contemporary poets between the covers of one book, as distinguished from the more usual, costlier and riskier method of presenting poets singly.

The maturest craftsman of these three Americans is Spencer Brown with *My Father's Business and other Poems*. As the distinguished veteran, John Hall

Wheelock, says of him in an admirable introduction, he is 'more bent on mastering and extending tradition than in subverting or ransacking it'. Joseph Langland's *The Green Town* is the most convincing of the three in innovations. He has a metaphysical and technical affinity with Donne, but his intellectual contriving is often even colder. The youngest is Lee Anderson, who presents *The Floating World and other Poems*. Though, like the others, he fairly and squarely faces the problems of this atomic age, he should just as honestly ask himself whether this pretty typical interpretation of it is poetry:

abracadabra
a b c
banish literal
ale spill spell
and wine spur lateral.

Certainly it is a relief to turn to the third and revised edition of Stanton Coblentz's masterpiece. The changes made in the original 1947 edition are neither many nor drastic, but all are of the greatest value and interest to those who believe that this work will remain as a monument of poetic achievement long after the abracadabra of the American intelligentsia is forgotten.

A PLEA FOR THE PAMPHLET

F. PRATT GREEN

Pebbles in my Pocket, by Brian Parvin; *Winter Crop*, by Arthur J. Bull; *Flowering Grasses*, by Peter Dunn (Outposts Publications, each 2s. 6d.).

Green Armor on Green Ground, by Rolfe Humphries (Scribner, 18s.).

Some Trees, by John Ashbery (Oxford University Press, 20s.).

These three twelve-page pamphlets of English and two handsome volumes of American verse induce some curious reflections. Why is it that print seems to lend authenticity to some poems? Why, on the other hand, does it show up the immature, ineffective, and trivial? An elaborate presentation, however, may make a poem seem more trivial than it is, much as ear-rings kill a certain kind of face. And what makes most of us want to see our work in print?

The poet who tries himself out in pamphlet form is not unwise. Without offering too large and perhaps premature a target to critics, he may well gain more readers than if he published a volume. The pamphlet, for which I would put in a strong plea, is within every reader's reach. We are grateful, therefore, to Mr. Howard Sergeant, for fathering, through Outposts Publications, this new series.

Of the three pamphlets before us, that by Brian Parvin makes the least impact, despite his sense of form. This is due, in some measure, to the fact that his unifying images - stone, sun, wave, grass, etc. - become monotonous. *Winter Crop* shows a more practised hand. These urbane, often witty, poems hold our attention and, without being ambitious, satisfy us. I particularly like 'Leaves'. Peter Dunn, in *Flowering Grasses*, achieves more than this. He, too, can be witty, but his strength lies in delicacy of perception and

statement. At his best, in such poems as 'Accidie' and 'Possessive Case', he is simple and profound. An acute observer of both nature and human nature he never indulges in mere cleverness, the besetting sin of some of his contemporaries. In his case we wish the pamphlet had been a book.

The American volumes are a joy to handle. The reader who can afford to buy them, or gets a librarian to do so, will find Rolfe Humphries's experiments in traditional Welsh metres interesting from a technical standpoint but disappointing as original poems. W. H. Auden does John Ashbery a disservice, in his foreword to *Some Trees*, by linking his name to Rimbaud. Here is a poet who ought not to be encouraged in his faults. When his poems make sense they make very good sense, as in 'The Instruction Manual' and even 'The Painter', which is anything but simple.

RECENT TRANSLATIONS

PAUL SELVER

Rilke: Selected Poems. Translated by C. F. MacIntyre (Cambridge University Press for University of California Press, 10s. 6d.).

Les Meilleurs Poèmes Anglais, by Félix Rose (Grant, Glasgow).

Fitzgerald's 'Salaman and Absal', by A. J. Arberry (Cambridge University Press, 25s.).

Yuan Mei: Eighteenth Century Chinese Poet, by Arthur Waley (Allen and Unwin, 21s.).

Confessions. Unpublished Sonnets by Racine, translated by Walter Roberts (Mowbray, 13s. 6d.).

The Mystery of the Holy Innocents, and Other Poems, by Charles Péguy. Translated by Pansy Pakenham (Harvill Press, 15s.)

Rossetti said: 'The life-blood of rhymed translation is this: that a good poem should not be turned into a bad one.' Here are six books which, in varying degrees, illustrate this aphorism and, incidentally, demolish the dreary allegation that poetry cannot be translated at all.

Mr. MacIntyre's selections from Rilke – accompanied by the originals, be it noted – contain some of his most mature and typical poems. The translator has succeeded in reproducing something of the peculiar tang of Rilke's lyrics, but he has simplified his difficult task by not keeping at all strictly to the form of the originals. Also, he indulges in rhymes favoured by the smart poetic set (*neighbour, heavier; matter, better; blood, shared* and so on), to which Rilke did not belong. The introduction and notes are more intelligible than those usually devoted to Rilke, but they are also more pretentious than need be. And was it necessary to sneer at Shelley, compared with whom Rilke was a midget, or at Verlaine, who was not exactly a poetaster?

Félix Rose, with whose work as a translator I have long been familiar, presents fifty English poems – rather rashly styled 'the best' – from Shakespeare to Masfield, via most of the eminent names between them, as well as folk-songs and Christmas carols. The French metrical renderings which face them are

adroit and ingenious. Mr. Rose has with much skill contrived to adapt himself to originals widely divergent in period, style and subject-matter.

Professor Arberry's critical study of FitzGerald's two separate translations of a Persian poem, the first of which preceded (in 1856) the *Rubáiyát*, is of enthralling interest. The introduction throws much important light on FitzGerald's activities as a translator, and the three texts (his first and second versions, together with a word-for-word rendering) provide a wealth of material for a comparative study.

This applies also to Mr. Arthur Waley's biography of a witty and ribald Chinese poet of the eighteenth century, enlivened by extracts from his works, which include a quaint cookery-book. These poems reveal the shoddy character of modern western efforts in a similar manner.

The interest of Racine's *Confessions* lies chiefly in the fact that they were discovered as recently as 1954. Mr. Roberts deserves credit for making them sound impressive in English. As for Péguy, it seems to me that he can appeal only to a limited number of readers. If there are any such who do not know French, this volume of translations will serve a useful purpose.

LIFTING THE VEIL

ROBERT ARMSTRONG

Further Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins. Edited by C. C. Abbott (Oxford University Press, 50s.).

Byron and Goethe, by E. M. Butler (Bowes and Bowes, 30s.).

William Blake's 'Vala'. Edited by H. M. Margoliouth (Oxford University Press, 42s.).

The letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins were first published in 1935 and contained his sensitive unburdenings to Bridges and Dixon. Their penetrative vivacity established him as a letter-writer worthy to rank with Keats. His *Further Letters* published in 1938 were concerned in part with his troubled conversion to Roman Catholicism, but mainly addressed to Coventry Patmore, floodlighting the strength and weaknesses of the verse of that elder poet. An enlarged edition has been compelled by the discovery in 1952 of seventy family letters, mostly to his mother, which show that his conversion, while drawing him into communion with Newman and Patmore, interposed a wasteland between his family and himself. Nevertheless our understanding of his poetry is reinforced, and we can delight in his limpid descriptions, his candour and, unexpectedly, his warm humour.

Professor Butler is to be complimented for her fascinating feat of literary detection by distilling from diaries, correspondence and other sources, including Goethe's later works, the influence exercised on him in his declining years by the great English romantic Lord Byron. Although one can accept Goethe's emotional and spiritual response to a dynamic poet forty years his junior, Byron's contribution to the destructive, demonic element in Goethe should

not be exaggerated. Liberation and revolt are the final Byronic attitudes, but Professor Butler is surely going too far – shades of Frederick the Great, Schopenhauer and Nietzsche! – to suggest in her conclusion that Bryon's legacy to Europe, through Goethe, was Hitlerism.

H. M. Margoliouth has devotedly reconstructed from the original text, for students of Blake, a poem 'Vala' of 3,403 lines that the poet, around 1800, expanded, redirected and renamed 'The Four Zoas' which was not published until 1893. The discontinuity and the 'emanations' of that later poem are in this way eliminated, and 'Vala' emerges as a fluent dream in nine phases, or 'nights' of Eternal Man's passage through terror and death to redemption. The symbolism is surprisingly clear, universal and soaring.

VERSE DRAMAS

F. PRATT GREEN

The Lizard on the Rock, by John Hall (Methuen, 10s. 6d.).

The Trial of Thomas Cranmer, by Anne Ridler (Faber & Faber, 12s. 6d.).

The True Mistery of the Nativity, adapted and translated by James Kirkup (Oxford University Press, 5s.).

Fire in Heaven, by Dannie Abse (Hutchinson, 8s. 6d.).

The prospects for verse drama, in the theatre, have clouded over since those hopeful days when *Murder in the Cathedral* and the early plays of Christopher Fry drew enthusiastic audiences. Nevertheless, verse dramas continue to be written and produced, in cathedral, by select society, on sound radio and television, and even printed, surprisingly enough, for a reading public which must be small indeed.

One wonders why John Hall lapses occasionally into verse in his prose drama *The Lizard on the Rock*. It seems reasonable in the scene in which the dead Canbery appears to Rockhart, but not elsewhere. This is an absorbing play, presenting unusual human relationships in an unusual setting, with a climax which should make it good theatre.

Anne Ridler's chronicle play, *The Trial of Thomas Cranmer*, has a cool distinction. As a literary production, doing careful justice to a man better fitted to phrase a prayer than play at Archbishop under Henry VIII, it commands our respect.

Our remaining two plays, a translation of a medieval mystery play about the Nativity and Dannie Abse's modern morality, are creations of the poetic imagination. The ecstatic faith of an adoring church is wonderfully captured by James Kirkup, whose lyricism carries us through the familiar story of the Nativity to a charming close. Charm is not the keynote of *Fire in Heaven*, which abandons the realism of naturalistic drama for the terrifying truth of a private and easily understood myth. Christian, in this myth, is compelled to be the executioner of his own family. There is much more to it, of course, than this; and more than horror. Poets have more to offer than despair at our human situation. It is a genuine verse-drama, as its publisher claims, not drama tricked out in verse, like an actor in costume.

POETRY AND PATRONAGE

NOTES BY THE EDITORIAL BOARD

(The inclusion of a new work in these notes does not preclude a subsequent review.)

Literary patronage, whether by individuals or institutions, has always been shared among the universities, especially here at home and in America. Therefore we welcome a publication sponsored by the University of Reading – *Seventeenth Century Songs*, edited by John P. Cutts and Frank Kermode from a Bodleian MS, and printed at the School of Art, presided over by Professor J. A. Betts. Unfortunately no price is marked: but the end-pages contain a list of nearly fifty subscribers before publication, and they must be very happy about the whole enterprise, which is skilful and scholarly. Beaumont and Fletcher, George Herbert and Richard Crashaw are among those represented by verses that have not previously been printed.

Several other books, recently arrived on the editorial table, are sponsored by universities at home and abroad. Two books from Hong Kong University may be coupled with a Hand and Flower Press publication. There is *The Integration of Poetry* by Bryn Jones (Hong Kong University Press and Oxford University Press, 12s. 6d.), and in *Winter's Right and Other Poems* by Elena Fearn (8s. 6d.) Miss Erica Marx shows again her impeccable taste. Edmund Blunden, of the Department of English at Hong Kong, contributes an introduction to Mr. Jones's book, a collection of critical essays, and he refers to the author as an enthusiast, 'a poet and a painter, still in an early stage of a career which will be well-marked by intellectual independence – and yet by a great faith in classical elements and poetry of ancient fame.'

Mr. Blunden has also contributed an introduction to a reprint by the same university of James Thomson's *Castle of Indolence* (12s. 6d.). He speaks of the poem as having been 'an inspiration, as a work of art, to numerous English poets, among them Wordsworth and Coleridge, Keats and Tennyson.' Edmund Blunden is having a unique literary influence in the Far East.

Since the death of another English poet, Walter de la Mare, the widespread nature of his kindness and understanding has been emphasized by numerous young writers. Donald Hughes, whose *Love and Laughter* (Rankin, Bristol, 15s.) is described as a 'Volume of Varied Verse,' has reproduced a letter from the elder poet in which this selection of more than two hundred pieces is not only praised – 'There is scarcely one love of yours indeed which is not one of mine' – but 'A Song of Love' is singled out especially with a wish 'that I could give ten thousand copies of this poem away.'

The editor of *Punch*, Malcolm Muggeridge, has given his blessing to one of the books of parodies by G. H. Vallins, so that the reader who prefers this kind of light verse will turn with interest to *After a Manner* (Epworth Press, 8s. 6d.). Among the poets parodied are Chaucer, Spenser, Herrick, and Dryden, also some of the moderns such as Housman and Hardy. As light as air are the verses in another witty volume *Lays for the Days*, by Mark Bevan (Midland Educational, 9s. 6d.), again with the blessing of an editor. He explains that he found the author and his work after searching for someone to ensure that, for the readers of the *Birmingham Daily Post*, 'Monday mornings

would be gay, not gloomy.' And he adds: 'Mark Bevan's work has established itself among the best-loved features of the paper.'

The Emily Dickinson-like spirit expressed in the writings of Margiad Evans – *A Candle Ahead* (Chatto and Windus, 8s. 6d.) – has a subtle and visionary power which is admirably conveyed in the opening stanza of 'The Town':

The field is missing from the flower,
the forest from the leaf:
The skies are absent from the light,
amazingness from grief –

and Elizabeth Bishop's *Poems* (Chatto and Windus, 8s. 6d.) have something of the same quality:

I dreamed that dead, and meditating,
I lay upon a grave, or bed,
(at least, some cold and close-built bower).

Miss Bishop's poetry, first published in America, is accompanied overseas by some impressive testimonials. Her's is 'a major voice,' declares the *Chicago Sun Times*, and on our side of the Atlantic a reviewer in *The New Statesman* thinks her the best American poet – again since Emily Dickinson.

Friend of Tennyson and Emerson, Rossetti and Carlyle, Coventry Patmore was a nineteenth-century poet whose life and work were apparently contradictory, and much ink has been spent on resolving the paradox. The latest book, *Coventry Patmore*, by E. J. Oliver (Sheed and Ward, 12s. 6d.) covers the ground fairly, and his position in English poetry is estimated for twentieth-century readers. Another prose-work, though only in pamphlet, is J. C. Trewin's *Verse Drama since 1800* (Cambridge University Press, 2s. 6d.), a full and valuable survey by a theatre-critic who has no false gods.

Accompanying it from the same publishing house is *Le Regard d'Orphée*, by J. B. M. Barrère, professor of French Literature in the University of Cambridge. The reader must understand, though, that this, his inaugural lecture, is itself in French.

If they are wise, the countless spare-time students and scholars who devote themselves to the life and work of our greatest poet will be grateful for *Shakespeare, a Pictorial Biography* by F. E. Halliday (Thames and Hudson, 25s.). This beautifully produced and spacious volume is intended, as the preface tells us, 'quite simply to describe what we know about Shakespeare's life after three centuries of discovery, and to illuminate and animate the story by illustrations.' And what illustrations! Facsimile reproductions of Elizabethan and Jacobean records, photographs of Stratford-upon-Avon – all sorts of helpful additions to the scholarly and entertaining text.

Tragedy darkens the poetry of *The Muse in Prison* ('Svoboda,' Jersey City U.S.A., unpriced). Yar Slavutych, a Ukrainian writer now living in California has written eleven memoirs of his poet-countrymen who have been political victims since the Ukraine declared its independence in 1918. The book is a poignant witness to the truth of Burns's lines about Man's inhumanity to Man . . . Relief comes to the reader who turns to *The Collected Poetical Works* –

POETRY SOCIETY SPECIAL

THE ANNUAL LUNCHEON FOR ALL MEMBERS AND THEIR FRIENDS

will be held at The English-Speaking Union, Dartmouth House, 37 Charles Street, Berkeley Square, London, W.1.

SATURDAY, 11TH MAY, 1957

at 12.35 for 1.15. This is a Get-Together Luncheon, and applications for Tickets, 15s. each (exclusive of wines), should be made early, as the accommodation is limited.

Accompanied by a remittance, the application must be addressed to Mrs. T. L. Adamson, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Cheques must be made payable to The Poetry Society.

In accordance with the Licensing Regulations the names and addresses of those who wish to attend, and of their guests also, must accompany their application, which can be made from 1st April onward.

Distinguished Visitors will be present, and the President and the General Council are the official hosts and hostesses.

REMEMBER THE DATE – SATURDAY 11TH MAY – AND
EVERYBODY IS WELCOME.

Volume III, by Donald Cowie (Tantivy Press, 12s. 6d.). Mr. Cowie prides himself on writing 'in the modern idiom but in traditional forms.' And he is a prolific writer. There are eighty pieces in this collection and his traditional-modern style is indicated in the first and the closing lines of the book: 'Who walks at fragrant eve the garden blent' – 'A memory of loveliness which never can decay, let time try as it may.' Martin Moynihan takes us to Burma in *South of Fort Hertz* (Mitre Press, 7s. 6d.). His poem is a narrative of the recent campaigns, and the author, now deputy high commissioner for Pakistan, writes with authority and also a deep appreciation of nature in her various moods. So does Ella Wells Thomson, whose book *Of Common Things* is issued by the same publishers (5s.). More physically interested than in moods is Peter Viereck, an American poet whose talent has been characterized by William Carlo Williams as 'rising like a lovely bird . . . in the purest sense lyrical, sensitive, distinguished in feeling.' From the Fortune Press we have received *The Bridge of Stars* by Vera Staff (6s.), a book of lyrics of which several appeared in *The Poetry Review* and other periodicals. Miss Staff's love of wild creatures and trees stirs her to fierce indignation when she writes of the vandals who have felled her Orton's Wood – and she writes with deadly thrust:

And now to take your patient life come these
Who have not power to create one branch.

To explain six other books we might almost use the title of one for them all – *The Quiet Heart*. This applies specifically to Harry Waine's gentle pictures in

verse of the simpler essential things (Northumberland Press, Gateshead, 10s. 6d.). *Lest We Forget* by Flower James (The Author, Westbrooke, Worthing, 5s. 6d.) has its stormy moments, but 'There Was a Garden' is a keynote as well as opening line of a poem. *Verses from Cowley*, by Katharin Sparks (Abbey Press, Abingdon, 2s. 6d.) has irony as well as charm – 'Your climb to the skies led you to earth; where all dreaming lies.' *Heather Mixture* is a collection of ballads by W. J. Cowie, who is named The Deskford Bard (MacLellan, Glasgow, 3s. 6d.). These are worth looking at by any reader who has an ambition to be a reciter. Also from Scotland comes *The Kintyre Poems* by John Donald (MacLellan, 2s. 6d.). Naomi Mitchison will doubtless be interested in the lyric 'Cambeltown' with 'a rambling street and a fishing fleet,' because she lives and writes in that corner of Argyllshire.

Critical Papers by John Alexander Chapman (Holywell Press, Oxford, 3s.) is a gathering of essays on poetry, thoughtful, scholarly, sometimes penetrating, well written. The opening piece, 'The Morning of Poetry,' is delightful. *The Quare Fellow* is Brendan Behan's comedy-drama (Methuen, 10s. 6d.) which impressed London playgoers last year.

The best of four other volumes from across the Atlantic is *With Stardust on His Glasses* (Wings Press, 2.50 dollars) in spite of a bizarre title. *White Beauty*, by Mildred Jones Keefe (Expression Company, unpriced); *Unexpected Truce*, by Don Geiger (Round Table Books, 2.50 dollars); and *The Greenhouse in the Garden*, by Charles Edward Eaton (Twayne Publishers, New York, 2.75 dollars) make us wonder what has become of the more established poets and their publishers?

Greece and Spain, India and old Italy – here are the sources of some collections of translated verse. *Translating Horace*, by J. B. Leishman (Cassirer, Oxford, 16s. 6d.) is the most vital of them: it consists of thirty odes, and a critical essay is added. *The Penguin Book of Spanish Verse*, edited by J. M. Cohen (5s.), covers a country's whole 'great flowering' – or, to be exact, double great, for this was one that lasted from the beginning of the fifteenth to half-way through the seventeenth century, and the other from the nineteenth to about thirty years ago. The translations are in prose – beautiful prose – a wise policy. From a 'Coleccion Poesia de America' we have an Emesta Gutierrez anthology *Yo conocia algo hace tiempo*, but this is not a translation, nor has any translator helped the English ignoramus. *The Centre*, by R. de L. Furtado, is published by the Cromlech Press, Pembrokeshire, and written in English – by the editor of *Tisco News*, Bihar, India.

P. M. Pope's translations of *The Anacreonta* (Bowes and Bowes, 10s. 6d.) retain the essential gaiety and thistledown lightness of a well-loved Greek poet of old. But among the epitaphs on Anacreon why do we not find Goethe's immortal lines written at his grave?

TO REMIND YOU –

- (1) that the Quiet Room at our headquarters, 33 Portman Square, is open daily for the use of Members and Readers . . .
- (2) that the Exhibition of Books written by Members is permanently established in the Hall at headquarters.

COMPETITIONS FOR EVERYBODY – READERS AS WELL AS POETS

I – *Treasure Hunt* . . .

ALICE HUNT BARTLETT SECOND INTERNATIONAL CONTEST

The Poetry Society has pleasure in announcing another fascinating new *Competition for Poets, Non-Poets, and Readers of Poetry*. Through the generosity of the late Alice Hunt Bartlett, who empowered her Executors to arrange for a number of International Prize Competitions for members of The Poetry Society and their friends, we are again able to offer – a second record figure –

ONE HUNDRED POUNDS IN PRIZES

No prize will exceed FIFTY POUNDS, and none will be less than TEN POUNDS. The qualities required to win are simple: a love of Poetry, a little Imagination, and a Good Memory. Competitors need never have written a line of verse in their lives!

But the would-be winner will be well advised to join The Poetry Society, because the Competition will continue for several issues, and a set of coupons, clipped from each of the numbers of *The Poetry Review* in which an instalment appears, must accompany the entry at the conclusion of the Contest. Membership of The Poetry Society ensures that *The Poetry Review* – or *The Voice of Youth*, the associate quarterly – is received free each quarter. For details, see the cover-pages at the end of this number, where the first coupon will also be found. Answers must be written or typed on one side of sheet only.

This is a unique Competition: a sequence compiled by 'Palgrave Q. Dobree' entirely of HIDDEN VERSES FROM KNOWN POEMS. All verses are authentic quotations, taken from the middle or near-middle of a poem, and for the guidance of entrants, here is an example: The first four lines are to be found in 'Go, My Flock,' the ninth song in 'Astrophel and Stella,' by Sir Philip Sidney (1554–86). (One or two 'jests' are included!)

We invite readers everywhere to trace the source of as many verses as possible. The winners will be those who give the largest correct number of sources.

But the winners of the recent 'Last Lines' Contest – i.e., all who shared the prize money – are not eligible for this new Competition. A second chance is thus offered to those who narrowly missed an award.

The Competition will extend over several issues. Competitors must retain their lists of sources until the serialization is concluded. Instructions for submitting them will then be published, and, as the Competition is world-wide, ample time allowed for the mailing of entries. Meanwhile, make a note of each source along with the corresponding number. Each hidden verse is numbered alongside. And the first instalment from poems of old or recent date now follows.

HIDDEN VERSES

I

MAN AND CREATURES

1. If I saw my good dog grievèd,
And a help for him did know,
My love should not be believèd
But he were by me relieved.
2. Her flocks are thoughts. She keeps them white;
She guards them from the steep.
She feeds them on the fragrant height,
And folds them in for sleep.
3. With gates of silver and bars of gold
Ye have fenced My sheep from their Father's fold.
4. Phoebe drest like beauty's queen,
Jellicoe in faint pea-green,
Sitting all beneath a grot
Where the little lambkins trot.
5. The Nightingale's a choir, no single note:
Oh! various power of God in one small throat.
6. Amazed the gazing rustics ranged around:
And still they gazed, and still the wonder grew
That one small head could carry all he knew.
7. There might ye see the peony spread wide,
The fullblown rose, the shepherd and his lass,
Lapdog and lambkin with black staring eyes
And parrots with twin cherries in their beak.
8. Her white teeth tore the wild-rice stems;
And as she moaned her green eyes grew
Lurid like shining baleful gems
With fires volcanic lighten'd through.
9. Cats, no less liquid than their shadows,
Offer no angles to the wind.
10. The cat sat in front of her looking-glass
A-whispering was she:
'If I *told* a tale as long as that
How tiresome I should be!'
11. Now for the sins I must confess:
Fearing infection, I once kept
My clean cat from a filthy child
Who suddenly read my thought, and wept.
12. Only – the thought disturbs him –
He's noticed once or twice,
The times are somehow breeding
A nimbler race of mice.
13. Ah, but the cat! Distinguished,

- Remote, calm, self-sufficient,
 She walks her ways in mystery
 Delicately aloof:
 She performs her ritual washings,
 Strange priestess of the shrine
 That is her glistening body . . .
14. Then, where of Indian hills the daylight takes
 His leave, how might you the flamingo see
 Disporting like a meteor on the lakes –
 And playful squirrel on his nut-grown tree.
 15. Now ere the foreign singer thrills
 Our vale his plainsong pipe he pours,
 A herald of the million bills;
 And heed him not, the loss is yours.
 16. The human vision sees the victim there
 And human reason knows her whole despair.
 A tactful hand (no paw of murderous lout
 But kind Ruth Pitter's) plucks the sufferer out.
 17. No bitterness, but the wearied tolerance
 Of one outliving all was in that glance
 Before he looked away with quiet disdain
 To contemplate his timeless past again.
 18. 'What this world's coming to I cannot tell,'
 He muttered, as I passed him, with a whine –
 'Things surely must be making slap for hell,
 When no one wants these little dogs of mine.'
 19. Is the Dark gone? The Light of Eyes restored?
 The Countenance turned meward, O my Lord?
 The Paw accepted, and – for all to see –
 The Abject Sinner throned upon the Knee? . . .
 He is forgiven, and All is as It was?
 Now am I in Thy Life, and since 'tis so –
 That Cat awaits the Judgment. May I go?
 20. All God's jokes are good – even the practical ones!
 And as for the duck, I think God must have smiled a bit
 Seeing those bright eyes blink on the day He fashioned it.
 And He's probably laughing still at the sound that came out of its bill!

LIFE AND DEATH

21. Last night returning from my twilight walk
 I met the grey mist Death, whose eyeless brow
 Was bent on me, and from his hand of chalk
 He reached me flowers as from a withered bough.
22. Joys among other things have wings
 And watch their opportunities of flight
 Converting in a moment day to night.
23. The weariest and most loathed worldly life
 That age, ache, penury and imprisonment

- Can lay on nature is a paradise
To what we fear of death.
24. Yet shall thy grave with rising flowers be drest,
And the green turf lie lightly on thy breast
There shall the morn her earliest tears bestow,
There the first roses of the year shall blow.
25. Ye desolate whirlwinds that rave,
I charge you be good to my dear!
She is all – she is all that I have,
And the time of our parting is near.
26. Ah! What a weary race my feet have run
Since first I trod thy banks with alders crowned,
And thought my way was all through fairy ground
Beneath thy azure sky and golden sun.
27. That still, despite the distance and the dark,
What was, again may be; some interchange
Of grace, some splendour once thy very thought,
Some benediction anciently thy smile.
28. Daith, ye're a daft field-bogle that a crow
Fley'd for a while, at last kens and disdains!
29. To the strand of the Daughters of the Sunset
The Apple-tree, the singing and the gold,
Where the mariner must stay him from his onset
And the red wave is tranquil as of old . . .
30. Love – what is Love? A great and aching heart;
Wrung hands; and silence; and a long despair.
Life – what is life? Upon a moorland bare
To see Love coming and see love depart.
31. Anni labuntur, Postume, Postume!
Years glide away, and are lost to me, lost to me.
32. Time goes, you say? Ah no!
Alas, Time stays – *we* go.

(To be continued)

II – *For Poets under 30 . . .*

THE MENDIP PRIZE COMPETITIONS: NUMBER THREE

A third generous offer has been made by a Friend of Poetry who wishes to remain anonymous.

A PRIZE OF FOUR POUNDS

will be awarded for a poem by a competitor between seventeen and thirty years of age. The poem must be lyrical with a pastoral theme, and is not to exceed thirty lines.

Reporting on the Award in an earlier competition, Stephen Graham wrote: 'If young people feel something in the English countryside it is right that they should be encouraged to try to express it in poetry. For that reason the donor of The Mendip Prize has made a gesture fully worthwhile.'

The winning poem will be published in *The Poetry Review*, along with the poet's name. The Editorial Board will adjudicate, and entries must be submitted not later than 1st July, 1957. Envelopes to be marked 'Mendip Prize,' and addressed to *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1, **accompanied by a Coupon, clipped from the end page of this issue and securely fastened to the entry.**

III – *A Famous Annual*

THE GREENWOOD COMPETITION FOR 1956-7

The Poetry Society is empowered by the executors of the late Mrs. Julia Wickham Greenwood to offer the sum of

TWENTY POUNDS

as the Shirley Carter Greenwood Prize for the best single poem in open competition.

Entries should be addressed 'The Greenwood Prize', 33 Portman Square, London, W.1. Only one poem may be submitted by any one competitor, the length not to exceed 250 lines; no previously published poem may be entered. The full name and address of the author must be given and a stamped addressed envelope enclosed if return of the poem is desired. **Also a Coupon must be attached, clipped from the end page of this issue.** If a nom-de-plume is adopted, name and address of sender must be given in a closed envelope bearing the pseudonym. The winning poem will be printed in *The Poetry Review* and may be reprinted at the discretion of the Editorial Board, who may also reserve near winners for publication in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date is 31st August, 1957. (Not 1958, erroneously dated in last issue).

IV – *Members and Subscribers only*

THE PREMIUM COMPETITION

The above competition continues as before with the

TOTAL ENTRANCE FEES AS PRIZE MONEY

which may be won outright by a single competitor or may be divided at the discretion of the Premium Adjudicator. An entrance fee of 2s. 6d. will be charged, and a stamped addressed envelope should be enclosed if a receipt is desired. Competitors must observe the following rules:

1. One poem only may be entered by each competitor.
2. The poem must be typed and no stamped addressed envelope will be required unless a receipt is desired (See Rule 3).
3. Competitors must retain copies of their poems, as none can be returned.
4. Entries must be addressed 'Premium Competition', *The Poetry Review*, 33 Portman Square, W.1.
5. Each poem must bear the author's name and address.
6. Entrants must be members of the Poetry Society or regular subscribers to *The Poetry Review*.
7. The winner of a full Premium or one who has shared the prize money will not be eligible for re-entry for twelve months.
8. No previously published poem may be entered.

The closing date for the next Premium Competition will be 1st June, 1957.

V – *An Old Favourite*

ORIOLE PRIZE, 1957

ORIOLE (a Poets' Group of The Poetry Society) offers an award of

FIVE POUNDS

for the best poem on a subject – Exploration. The Competition is open to all; entrance fee 2s. 6d. per entry. Competitors must adopt a pseudonym which should appear in block capitals on the manuscript, and in a sealed envelope containing the entrant's name and address. The entry not to exceed 32 lines.

Poems will not be returned. The winning poem may be published in *The Poetry Review*. Closing date, to be announced. Address: Oriole Prize, The Poetry Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

LATEST PRIZE REPORTS AND AWARDS

THE GREENWOOD AWARD 1956

KATHLEEN VALMAI RICHARDSON

My general comments shall be as brief as possible to save space for mention of the best examples from the many categories received. With over two hundred entries stacked before me it was essential to formulate what this award should require and not to be beguiled by occasional flashes of poetic insight among the more curious, furious and (alas) spurious eye-catchers arrived from all parts, mostly notably the U.S.A. Being convinced that the generous line-allowance ought to be used to advantage in gaining height, depth and breadth in proportion to length; that a good poem should sustain a theme without prolixity; that subjective poems should range beyond the purely personal, and objective ones feel as well as philosophize; that poets, as part of humanity, should express themselves as such; I am to look, above all, for *poetry*: which involves both emotions and intellect; which satisfies both eye and ear.

Many well-turned short lyrics competed, among the best those by: May Sarton (U.S.A.), Melissa Measham (Ipsden), Gwyneth Tait (Birkenhead), Patricia Howson (Preston). Best legend poems: Enid Madoc-Jones (Colwyn), Kenneth Hare (Stroud), A. G. L. McPearce Higgins (Huntingdon). Mystics: Doris Major (Hendon), Carmela Moya (Ewell), Kenneth Smith (London). Satirics: Derek Stanford (London). Salty native idiom: Charles E. Ross and Jim Dakin (U.S.A.). Two delightful essays in traditional forms: Mildred Meaker (elegiacs) and Alice Hart (sestina), both from U.S.A.

The Last Eight, a very close contest between narrative and lyric power in poignant expression: Joseph Tusiani (New York), Alan Smithies (Rugby), Mark Bourne (Machynlleth), Myrtle Adams (Ontario), John Smith (Gerrards Cross), Maurice Tasnier (Weston-super-Mare), Evelyn Roche (Haverford-west). From these I select Joseph Tusiani's moving poem 'The Return', which we hope to print in a future number.

ORIOLE COMPETITION - MYSTICAL POEM

LEIGH VAUGHAN-HENRY

To the Competitors. I have to offer my personal apologies for the delay in the judging of this Competition, for which I am personally and solely responsible.

The delay was caused by, first, the Oriole Group being at the time temporarily without a member functioning as honorary secretary, due to the death of Mrs. Fanny Moore, with the result that Competition matter had to come to me. Second, a further complication occurred, owing to my having suddenly to undergo an eighteen months' radium treatment for an illness, now happily pronounced cured. Third, that, to avoid the London and environs fog-belt, I was obliged to leave my old home and purchase my present one in a more suitable atmosphere.

EDITORIAL NOTE. - We hope to give further news of the Mystical Poem Competition in our next number. Mr. William Kean Seymour asks us to explain to numerous enquirers that although approached by Dr. Leigh Henry to act as adjudicator he did not then receive any entries for his consideration.

ORIOLE POETRY PRIZE – THE SPIRIT OF PLACE

SIR JOHN SQUIRE

I think that 'The Spirit of Place' as a theme may have troubled the entrants, very numerous, in this competition; a concrete, rather than an abstract, subject might, I think, have produced better results. Those who took the subject literally got lost in a mist, one of them in a platonic mist, thinking of archetypes in heaven. The more practical ones realized that the best way of conveying the Spirit of Place was by expressing feelings about a particular place, or several particular places, which would illustrate the more general conception. If the competitors had been asked to write about (given the choice of subjects) the Straits of Dover, the New Forest, the South Downs, Dartmoor, Land's End, Wales, the Roman Wall, the Broads, etc., we should have had more sincere feeling.

There is plenty of that, however, in these entries. The trouble is that so many of the most ardent competitors (a) have no idea about form, (b) are uncertain about scansion and (c) lapse into banalities, which let the reader down. During weeding after weeding, I found myself reluctant to discard verses which contained lapses of stress which no craftsman could pass.

In the end I found myself reduced to three entries: 'A Singer Flies Home' by 'Exile', 'Reading Abbey' by John de Fornsete, and 'Whyteleaf' by 'Pennant.' For sheer craftsmanship the best was obviously the poem by 'Exile', which expresses a longing for Australia by an exile in California, who thinks that in California 'love is mostly lust,' and hankers after Australia where 'poets thrive'. The poem is insulting to America (where I don't suppose that lust is worse and more prevalent than anywhere else) and flattering to Australia, whence little good poetry has come.

The poem on 'Reading Abbey' is beautifully written and beautifully felt, written in good couplets. The poem on 'Whyteleaf' scans all right, and is meant well. The authoress places herself in a village on the Chilterns, and imagines herself spiritual mate to all the men who have gone off to all the Wars from that part of the world. It seemed to me, nevertheless, although the author is sincere, a made thing – made to a pattern.

After much hesitation, I should like to award the prize to 'Reading Abbey', not because of the opinions expressed in it, but because of its combination of feeling and form.

NOTE – *For prize poem, see page 84.*

PREMIUM COMPETITION REPORT No. 30

MARY GILES

Two poems stand out from all the other entries in this competition. They are 'Funeral Dirge' by Elizabeth Drury, and 'Fulfilment' by Richard A. Willes.

I find 'Funeral Dirge' a very moving poem. There is a depth of feeling which is sustained throughout. I wonder whether or not the repetition of 'no' instead of 'nor' in the seventh line would have given added force?

'Fulfilment' is a delightful poem marred a little, I think, by the last two lines of the third verse. However, this is merely splitting hairs. Only after a great deal of deliberation have I been able to decide that the award should go to 'Funeral Dirge', with 'Fulfilment' a very close runner-up.

I wish to commend Winifred Kingdon-Ward's poem 'Wild Arum' highly for its imagery. Other poems which should be commended are 'Acceptance' by A. E. Dodd, 'The Beggars' by Celia Randall, 'Lagoon at Bilene Macia, Moçambique' by May Thomas, 'The Skull at Peace' by J. Phoenix, 'Pit Heap' by D. R. W. Carr, and 'Request' by Alice Yardley.

FUNERAL DIRGE

ELIZABETH DRURY

O God, the darkest night my soul will know,
Creeps over me with unrelenting urge,
Like some vast army bound to crush the foe
And turn its battle-cry to funeral dirge.
No time is left to gather up the hopes
Which once so proudly held the mind in sway;
Nor chance to reap the trust which blindly gropes
Through total darkness to the dawning day,
For now the threatened hour has been fulfilled;
Now grief is timeless in despair and tears;
Yet this endures – my heart with love instilled,
Remembers him as laughing down the years.
O God of Love, I pray, grant this to me,
Thy love, and his, for all Eternity.

WARNING FROM OVERSEAS WORK IN PROGRESS AT THE CENTRES

BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF

What an illuminating report has come from the Natal and Durban Centre, South Africa. It concerns the Centre's poetry competitions, and the chairman, Mr. Thomas H. Lawrence – to whom again our felicitations – and Mr. G. V. Arthur, a co-adjudicator, have sent it on behalf of their committee, whose address for enquiries, incidentally, is 15 Overport Drive, Durban.

After expressing disappointment that many of the entrants for the 1956-57 awards 'fell far below the standard hoped for,' the report includes a warning that if the poet sees in poetry a challenge to the intellect he runs a risk of obscurity. 'There is no virtue in deliberate obscurity. Already in contemporary poetry there are signs of a return swing of the pendulum towards clarity of expression.'

Certain tendencies in the work of the young entrants, who include Afrikaans – the age limit of the competitors ranged from eight years upwards – are specified: (1) The tendency to over-estimate the 'autobiographical' in poetry and its interest for the

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It has now been decided to extend the service to non-Members, but at a different rate of 5s. for each poem submitted. It is particularly requested that all poems submitted should be typed and that a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed.

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reader – ‘the young poet who spends his time in pointing out the utter futility of love and bemoaning his frustrations is not producing any new rabbit out of the hat;’ . . . (2) the tendency to cover up poor writing by attempting to shock the reader, or to mistake the ‘smart’ or ‘slick’ phrase for a poetic image; and (3) the tendency ‘to set one’s efforts off against some or other modern phrase that one has ready for the occasion.’

Finally: ‘The modern poet still needs to give patient study to the magnificent body of English poetry that has grown up through the ages – i.e., to what is commonly called the “traditional”.’

SUFFOLK

With more than usual regret the resignation of Kay Turner as hon. secretary of this Ipswich-based Centre was accepted at their recent annual general meeting. Mr. Francis Engleheart, the chairman, pays a grateful tribute to Miss Turner: ‘One of our only three members who belonged to a poetry organization which flourished here between the wars, she was an indefatigable secretary in whose hands all went smoothly. We are sad to lose her services. Happily Miss Barbara Cooper, hitherto our efficient and popular hon. treasurer, has consented to take her place and can be found at 17 Warrington Road, Ipswich.’

Miss Turner writes that the new Hon. Secretary is a great friend of hers, ‘and I know she will be a very efficient secretary.’ Miss Turner explains that a reason for her resignation is the anxiety caused by the declining health of her mother. We at headquarters have received the news sadly too, and our gratitude goes out to one of the Society’s best workers, a rare and beautifully-spirited personality. We trust all will be well domestically. To Barbara Cooper, her successor, we offer a warm salute and happy wishes.

BURGESS HILL

A winter memory to warm the members of the flourishing Centre at Burgess Hill, Sussex, was the richly-glowing lecture on ‘The Verb in Poetry’, by Kennedy Williamson of The Editorial Board. Mr. Williamson received an official letter of thanks for the most helpful and inspiring talk, which made the listeners see into poetry ‘more than anything else has done.’ One member who had been in great trouble was helped by the talk, the letter continues, and the Reading included extracts from the Old Testament, Shakespeare, and many of the English poets. By request at the end of his talk Mr. Williamson read some of his own poetry with fine effect.

WALTON AND WEYBRIDGE

In recent months St. George’s Hills, the residence of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Rowland George, has through their generosity been the official ‘home’ of this Centre, and Mr. Robert Armstrong of our General Council gave the first lecture there, described in the report as a ‘brilliant address.’ John Gittens and Mrs. Elsie M. Gittens travelled from Brighton for these monthly gatherings, and Mr. Gittens was chairman for Mr. Armstrong.

When Kennedy Williamson gave his popular lecture the following month on ‘Water, Time, and Nature in *Macbeth*’ the secretary wrote that ‘several young people studying the play were seen taking extensive notes.’ The Hon. Mrs. Sylvia George has temporarily undertaken the secretarial duties, and the members have rallied ‘in spite of fog and lack of petrol.’

REIGATE

Here is richness again – we always give an exclamation like that when we turn to the doings at this mid-Surrey Centre. A reading of Browning’s ‘Pippa Passes,’ Shaw’s *St. Joan*, and Eliot’s *Murder in the Cathedral*: a selection of poems by W. H. Auden and C. Day Lewis: readings by Christopher Hassall and Geoffrey Tankard of their own unpublished verse . . . these comprise a year’s syllabus of monthly programmes. The meetings are held once a month on a Thursday afternoon, but

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THE POETRY SOCIETY

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

To the General Secretary,

General Offices of The Poetry Society (Incorporated),
33 Portman Square, London, W.1.

I desire to be enrolled as a member; entrance fee and first annual subscription (22/6d.) enclosed herewith.

(The Annual Subscription becomes due and renewable on the completion of one year from the date of joining. Cheques, etc., should be made payable to The Poetry Society.)

Name

Address

Date

in the summer evening meetings are occasionally held so that the menfolk are able to attend. Please note change of address, Mrs. M. A. Hicks, The Alton, St. Alban's Road, Reigate.

Note – For Directory of Centres, see previous issues.

PORTMAN SQUARE – LET MUSIC SOUND

We must confess that now and again we have been mildly titillated by the appearance among us of some courageously bare-kneed poet, but on 23rd November of joyous memory an influx of knobbly knees and gym tunics shook our foundations with a babel of excitement – the Voice of Youth, no less.

From an improvised dais, short poems on every subject were delivered in a modest but forthright manner by their even shorter authors, while the Misses Robinson, Corsie and Gillis stood in for those poets in absentia. We are undoubtedly all the better for this delicious experience and also for a bit of sound advice from Miss Evelyn Bangay on Workmanship. Two of Miss A. R. Kendall's nice pictures, so familiar to readers of *The Voice* added to the occasion, while the President and the Treasurer (alias John Graddon, editor of all this richness) assisted with the sub-dominance proper to all Over-Twenty-Ones. A lovely evening; let us have more, soon.

Kathleen Raine was the subject of J. M. Purser's talk on the following Friday, with June Franklin and Pamela Corsie reading. Mr. Purser, who never fails to be illuminating, shed interesting sidelights from D. H. Lawrence and Graham Greene upon his main theme. Robert Armstrong took the chair.

Audience Night produced a spate of Own Poems (some of them pretty promising too) and, astonishingly, the barest pair of knees as yet observed. These were crowned by a set of magnificent whiskers, but not, unfortunately, by the Voice of anything in particular. Certainly not with that Magic Touch in Poetry which, expounded by F. Pratt Green and introduced by Stephen Graham, fittingly closed the autumn series by delighting a large audience.

The President launched the New Year with an experiment which would bear repeating. This owed much of its success to expert co-ordination. With Charles Doran and Barbara Gilbert at the gramophones and a tape-recording outfit in the background, Thomas Moulton spoke of his life and work, reading extracts from poetry and prose. Pamela Corsie and Constance MacColl varied the voices, the latter showing beautifully how poetry may be married to music without losing its identity. The recording proves to be a perfect echo of that evening and should be of interest to Centres. 'An hour of sheer delight, giving the packed audience the definite impression that our President is a poet and storyteller of uncommon distinction.'

Though your reporter was unfortunate in being prevented from enjoying Kennedy Williamson's erudition concerning elements in *Macbeth*, she was able to catch Esmé Beringer's splendid talk on Mrs. Siddons and the truly blood-chilling portrayal of the sleep-walking scene from that same play. More drama followed when the O.U.D.S. visited us on 25th January, and admiration for the professional skill with which these young actors adapted their style to our Library size without losing essentials. They played Molière, Shakespeare, Sartre and Yeats; they were Tony Burrows, Astrid Anderson, Michael Poole, Ursula Belman, Anthony Bosworth, Geoffrey Stuart, Alan Shallcross, Jeffery Wickham, Penny Hopkins, Paul Noyes, Vernon Dobtcheff and Bryan Wright, excellently chaired by J. W. Russell. Which leaves us little space to say how much we enjoyed the freshness of Robert Bridger's 'London' evening (with Mollie Lawson and Ronald Sly) and how we looked forward to Wilton Cole Looking Backward again at a life spent with poetry, memorable in every way.

K.V.R.

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Type area 7 ins. deep by 4½ ins. wide. Column width 2 ins.

Block screen 85. Latest date for copy 7th preceding.

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- April 26 A. E. Coppard Memorial Reading. L. A. G. STRONG and The President, THOMAS MOULT, with Readers.
- May 3 Dr. MARIE STOPES. The Poems of the late Lt. Raoul Pugh, R.M., 'The Greatest Poet of the last War.'
- " 10 'Music and the Poet.' Arranged by PAMELA BARNARD. Chairman, EDWARD HAZELTON.
- " 17 "'I remember, I remember.'" - Life and Poetry of Thomas Hood. By STEPHEN GRAHAM, with SHULAMITE ROUKIN.
- " 24 American Poetry, Old and New. Reading by NATALIE MOYA, MARY GILES, JOHN GLEN.
- " 31 Birds and Flowers. Arranged by ROSAMUND GREENWOOD, with JOAN HART.
- June 7 'Scorn not the Sonnet.' With IRENE BRENT and ELIZABETH BROUGH.
- " 14 Our Own Poets. CARLA LANYON-LANYON, CELIA RANDALL, KATHLEEN V. RICHARDSON, FREDDOON KABRAJI.
- " 21 This for Remembrance. LORD VANSITTART, PEARL ADAM, ALBERT RALPH KORN. Arranged by ROBERT ARMSTRONG.
- " 28 REV. F. PRATT GREEN. 'A Poetry Quiz.'
- July 5 Poetry and Publishing. By ERICA MARX. Chairman, JOHN GRADDON.
- " 12 Audience Night.

The next Gold Medal Examination will be held at 33 Portman Square on Tuesday, 28th May, 7 p.m.

THE POETRY SOCIETY: ANNUAL GENERAL BUSINESS MEETING

The Annual General Business Meeting of the Poetry Society (Incorporated) will be held at the offices of the Society, 33 Portman Square, London, W.1., on Wednesday, 22nd May, 1957, at 3-0 p.m., to receive the annual financial statement, and elect the members of the General Council. Names of delegates representing Centres should be sent to the General Secretary not later than 5th April, 1957, together with names of the Centre representatives on the General Council.

Admission will be made upon production of membership cards.

Any member who wishes to bring any business before the Annual Meeting must give twenty-eight days' written notice thereof to the General Secretary. Nominations for membership to the General Council must be made by two members of the General Council or three unattached members twenty-eight days prior to the Meeting.

Any member wishing to inspect the audited Statement of Accounts before the General Business Meeting may do so at this office between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. (Saturdays excepted), or may have a copy sent on application enclosing a stamped addressed envelope after 30th April.

- By Order of the Council.

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